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By W. D. NESBIT.

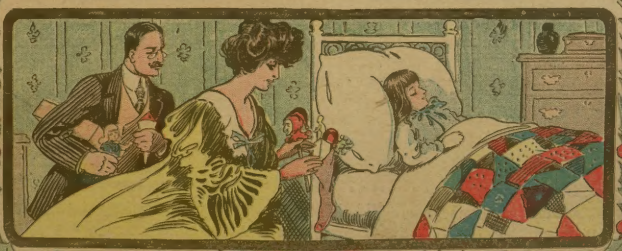
Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar—
Three wise men, came from afar
Led by that most wondrous star
Which swung over Bethlehem.
Melchior in his hands brought gold,
Caspar, spices rare and old,
Balthasar brought myrrh—'Tis told
In the legends wrought of them.

Aye, three wise men from the east,
Each urged on his plodding beast;
Gazing at the sky cloud fleeced;
Crossed the desert bleak and wild;
In strange costly garments clad,
Chanting songs serene and glad
For that in their arms they had
Gifts to heap before a child.

They came through the city wall,
Minding not the watchman's call;
They but knew that they must fall
Worshiping, upon their knees,
When they in their journey came
Where the downflung starry flame
Showed them Him they could not name—
Wisest of all wise men, these.

Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar—
Three wise men from lands afar—
Saw and knew the mystic star
Blazing over Bethlehem;
Out upon the pathless sands
They fared from their distant lands
With rare gifts held in their hands,
Spices, gold, and kingly gems.

So today we that are wise
See the new star in the skies
Echoed in the children's eyes
As unsullied souls that shine—
We bring gifts, for thus we show
That in our wise hearts we know,
As two thousand years ago,
Childhood is a thing divine.



X-RAYED BY LOVE;

THE DOUBLE OF THE CZAR.

By WILLIAM PERRY BROWN.

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CHAPTER V.

THE POCK-MARKED MAN.

Opposite the Gore mansion a man was turning off the street lights.

In the early dawn, Harry, still restless, sleepless, not withstanding his trying night, remained behind the shadow of a lamp post, when a man opened the front door and rapidly walked away.

"Carleton VanLear," commented Harry-aloud. "I will keep an eye on you. Don't like your looks, nor manner nor ways. Neither does that sweet-faced girl, if one may judge by her actions last night."

So he followed cautiously so as not to be easily noticed by the object of his espionage, who walked rapidly south for several blocks, then turned eastward at a gait that put Harry to a round four-mile-an-hour pace to keep in sight. Ten minutes or so found the neighborhood of General Gore entered, a large house with a school attachment at the corner of a side street, pretty well covered with the east side.

The Tenderloin is a movable area, but this semi-disreputable locality lay along the northern edge where the flat dwellers in the lower stories of the tenement houses, hitherto quietly called Harlem, begin to wonder where they are at.

Entering the ex-proprietor quickened himself as the man pass by the long bar, enter one of the private stalls at the rear, and by the sound of voices therein, greet some one, probably there before him.

Hagwood was not hungry, but he lighted a cigar and took his morning cup of coffee to a table nearest the stall in question, yet out of sight, and for once or back caught and listened, watched and waited.

"Now will nobody but the night de?" demanded some one to Harwood unknown, by voice at least.

"Won't do at all. Time must be given. I will have a talk with her this afternoon. Usually she is most amenable to reason and may be more tractable now that her grief is so great. If not—then we may have to resort to force. Policy indicates mild measures, as best all round, if mildness will assure."

Certainly the last voice was the voice of the man who had denounced Harry to the police less than eight hours before. Smoking, sipping his coffee, toying with the last "extra," Harry found himself two yards from the speakers, a thin partition between, and could always become invisible by the clear the cigar stand end of the establishment, Thereby the power of his own pride as if at such an infinitesimal needle-point of hearing the cuticle. The unfamiliar voice rejoined quickly:

"Well, sir, just as you think best. So long as my pay be forthcoming. I care little. Forest way, in my opinion, is the quickest way. Very simple, very easy. But what is this the kids are scouting on the street. Is the old man really——" The rest was whispered.

"Sure. One paramount reason why we should take some time, hunting, hunting, dead in the house—that mighty man. Everything depends upon relatives.

"True, true. Shocking, lamentable—who of you think really did the old man up? Of course, the police have arrested two merely jagged as a filler-blind, so the papers might say, perpetrated the real thing; or so I take it, eh?"

"Why look at me so curiously? I was heavily hit in the General's last corner, but had the bulls downed the bears I would have reaped good profit at his expense. When I marry his daughter it will come back to me, and more, for many years to."

"You have not married her yet, if I may comment. This murder, whoever is at the bottom of it, will make Miss Gore a firm torch, unless—unless—why, you were the very one who championed the newspaper chap! Having taken that violent, sensational step, would not the natural part be to continue to have done with sentiment? What you have to do, do quickly, and let sorrow, like other things, assume its proper consequences, dribble away afterwards at its own gait."

"It won't do, I tell you. Wait a bit. When I have acquired yet lovingly" (Harwood ground his teeth at the word) "the requirements of the case before her: if she then refuses me, there are all sorts. Gore died intestate, though it is not supposed so. First cousins only relatives in law, if not blood, it will not be difficult to maintain myself as his administrator and posthumous name and fortune—perhaps that of the noted Dr. Urquhart, here present."

"Well, we talk too much. If all goes well I am to have——"

"Two hundred dollars if you do not stir a peg; in fact, do nothing, say nothing, know nothing. For myself, I am fully paid and legally determine that she is—as I have said in case you are called on—dead, and one hundred a week as long as the tenure expects deem it necessary that she should indulge her sorrow in that interval retreat of yours——"

"Hush! You overlook other risks, sir, not the least of them being the indiscreet babbling of things which are better thought of than spoken aloud. Plans are all right, but who wants to run heedless risks in earning them? If I am to quietly wait, we had best separate here."

Whisperings followed, then a raking of feet as one of the men arose. Harry heard the strange man say warningly:

"I am off here. The cutting off of this dead Wall street magnate is going to kick up a more than nine days pother, unless some one is spotted. Too big a man, too big a mystery, too bold a——crime."

Presently Harwood, seated on the small of his back, behind his paper, saw from his dark corner a heavy set, pock-marked man walk ponderously by toward the door. This was he who was called by the General's nephew, Harwood knew, the owner of a noted private retreat for insane people somewhere on Long Island.

When Tarleton VanLear went out, later on, Harry hazed himself as much as possible behind the newspaper. Despite his waning look of sleep, he was greatly worked up over what had already taken place. Sleeping sidewards seemed on the point of turning into waking forwards. He could not bear the stall partition, but instead whispered a word at the cigar stand as he went out. But when, a moment later, the Baronet sauntered back to remove the emptied cups and glasses, Harwood's seat was vacant.

"Catch me giving those fellows another chance!" angrily ejaculated Harry, as he made himself scarce, through another narrow exit, unobserved.

"Seems to me as if the daughter of General Gore is being made the victim of some foul conspiracy. Only child, heir to God knows how many scores of Wall street millions, lovely as an angel, helpless as she is pure—why! Her relatives are as seldom as this only relative is treacherous, she needs help certainly. While I am helping myself, let me help her to look into the matter of her step-cousin."

"Who says I am out of a job! More work right now than I'm looking for, for a live man, so I hardly know which end to begin first."

He pulled oblivously at an obstinate under lip.

He was again moving westward, having fallen, unnoticed, into the wake of the General's nephew, but being careful not to lose him soon after reaching Broadway. That did not trouble Harwood's thoughts led him to the region outlying about the Tenderloin, where many of the windows where costumers displayed their wares.

"What had better be my next move?" he was saying to himself, when the fay figure display in one of the windows halted him short.

"Fay, very ideal!" he concluded. "Ought to have thought of that before."

CHAPTER VI.

"HE SHALL NOT GO!" SAID THE GIRL.

"Marry you? Never, never, never!"

The speaker, a graceful, saure-eyed girl, just budding into womanhood, indignantly faced the man who had seized a vital question.

"You need a protector; why not take me?" "Never, sir! Not while my father in his grave. It is revolting to think of anything with any one now. It will also be revolting to think of marrying you, so think you had better go."

The gallery was full. Though pallid with sorrow, her momentary anger only enhanced beauty and radiant loveliness. The man's sinister features showed chagrin, mortification, and vexation. But his malevolence would not control, a bitter smile showing as he said:

"Well, Elinor, while we are cousins by law, our union will smible me to more effectually look after your interests. The vast wealth that was your father's makes you the natural prey of every fortune-hunter."

"None so eager as yourself, Cousin VanLear. Either you take an open look. He always opposed my marrying you though he befriended you often enough, on the Street. He made you—used you——"

"General Gore must have thought well of me or he would not have made me what the law says I am now—your legal guardian and administrator of his—of your estate. A minor you are for two years or more. Things are widely scattered; millions here, hundreds of thousands there. It will vastly simplify matters if you are my wife as well as ward. Aside from that, Elinor——"

"Love!" This bitterly, scornfully, yet sadly, too. "You are lying, Tarleton VanLear. You may want me, but you do not love me, otherwise you would respect me. Your language to me is not only positively indecent."

VanLear's eyes flashed ominously, his temper was giving way.

"This is some scheme of yours," continued Miss Gore, "to revenge yourself on me—because of the heavy obligations you were under to my father in Wall street. I have heard things of late——"

"You are a silly girl, Elinor. More than that it is evident to more than one who has talked with you that your mind is already affected by the shock of your father's mysteriously awful death. Others notice this, I say. Incapable of managing your own affairs, you must be watched. If need be, restrained from doing and saying things that are unwise, hurtful, even fatal, it may be said, to your own interests, now in my hands. Are not these good reasons for all I have said?"

"You are the flighty one, sir, to talk to me like this. I may be at your mercy, in some sense, but you impose on no one, least of all on me, by slanders not less disgusting than untrue."

"Do not fool yourself, Elinor. Those gentlemen you saw yesterday are physicians, experts in mind disease. Do not give me any advice, yet persistently they questioned you as if only visually fixed on you."

"I thought them at times quite impertinent."

"So I judge, yet they were not. Your flighty, angry replies and your singular manner have certainly said so. Do you know what these men have done, Elinor?"

"How would I know? I thought them strangely curious. What business had they here with me?"

"They were here to certify to your unsoundness of mind, resulting from this and other scenes."

"Speak out, Tarleton! Do they mean to say I am crazy? And you would marry me now?" She eyed him as one might look at some reptile.

Notwithstanding her alarm, he saw that she read his real motives beneath the absurd shock of her interrogation with which they were clothed. The knowledge added to his rage, but assumed a mocking air.

"It is all a base conspiracy," she added, then to herself, not at once, reply. "Heaven help me! Where shall I find help?"

She was speaking as much to herself as to her companion, but he had misjudged her high daunt enough to again assert himself.

"I will tell you what you are going as I wish, Elinor. Otherwise I will be compelled to assert legal authority over you as a ward and a minor. You may have to be kept in some private retreat until your reason——"

"My reason!" She interrupted and her under lip curled contemptuously. "I have long suspected what you were a villain. Now I know. Leave the room, sir! I wish to be alone."

"No! Till you have agreed to be my wife. Then all will be well. Do not compel me. I am resolved to save my interests, and mine as executor, to have you sent to Dr. Urquhart's Retreat, probably for months, perhaps for life."

A faint cry was Elinor's response to this cruel alternative, for she felt her helplessness. The very magnitude of her dead father's name, fame and wealth, the vast complexity of the operations, cut off the herself from all touch with the master hand, in not a moment, yet completely, rendered her all the more at the mercy of Tarleton VanLear.

She sank into a chair, buried her face in her hands, and burst into tears, though she would far rather have covered this show of feminine dependence by an undaunted and composed mien and manner.

When came a knock at the door, a servitor's

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deferential tapping, which preceded the entrance of a young man in a waiter's garb, napkin over arm, instead of the customary liveried dining-room finery. Thin faced, medium sized, swarthy, with curling black hair, he also wore spectacles with smoked lenses as if his eyes were weak.

"Why are you not in livery?" demanded VanLear angrily, as if he was master there. "Want my mean by intruding this way?"

"Luncheon is served, ma'am," announced the new attendant.

"Leave the room!" shouted VanLear in a rage.

"He shall not go!" exclaimed Ellinor. "His duty is still at least greater than your further insult."

VanLear controlled himself, looked suddenly knowing, as if her use of violent or strange language before a servant, might, if need, be adduced as further evidence of unsound mind. Then he took up his hat.

"Well, he may remain," he assented, "to have business elsewhere now. However," drawing close and whispering, though she knew always from his voice when he was in a towering rage, "I will not be long tomorrow. If, by this time tomorrow you have not agreed to what I have proposed, as best all round, coercive means will follow. As your guardian and the nearest legal relative, I have full authority." Then, to the waiter: "Out of the way, fellow!"

VanLear strode from the room, faded from the house in search of a private autocab and was whirled over the asphalt to his club, there to—on his arrival—find his been awaye that sins new servitor was listening at a po.tere for several minutes prior to his entrance. Which by-the-by the young nephew-in-law would have been even more surprised to know.

Miss Gore, raising her eyes from despondent reflection, saw the new waiter standing her respectfully. Something in his manner inspired confidence. She felt very helpless and forlorn, just then, notwithstanding her brave front shown to VanLear.

After the luncheon request and the formal burial of her father in the ponderous family mausoleum on Long Island, she had gone to a temporary home, though invitations numberless were extended to the daughter of the dead financier, by persons where the privacy of her grief would be respected, but she had shrunk from such and all, retained only her maid besides the reduced force of regular servants, to which this new man had, somehow, been added. The latter's regnate had immediately recognized VanLear's claim as administrator-guardian, and even said that Mr. VanLear, being the nearest relative, had a right to his award as cousin, was eminently fitted, both by ability, kinship and position, to at once assume full control of the young princes' personal affairs, within the law.

Ellinor was free from Vassar—not a graduate yet, though another year might witness this. She had not made a formal entry into society, and had always had the domestic chaperonage in the shape of aunts, sisters or married friends. Her present situation, great as had been the renown of her father, left her a distinctly friendless, desolate, and, in truth, friendless. Women understand these strange, troubled depths, and others may not fathom or pride to out of sub-knowledge seldom vouchsafed to more men.

Under plea of the disagreeable associations with the house of mourning, death, and the fact that the author was still undetected, so that the police, detectives of all sorts, were constantly in and out—which was yet about, Ellinor had allowed VanLear at first to close the conspicuous mansion and just around the corner, where, though the property was her own as bequeathed in her vests from the butler down were creatures of Tarleton VanLear.

She was somewhat aware of this in various small, vexatious ways. The sight of a new man servant, therefore, the mother busy in cast unexpectedly to one about to drown. Three years away at school and college emphasized her sole sense of his respectful yet singularly solicitous, not to say pitying, regard.

Still looking at him, she rose, approached him slowly while a wan smile replaced the habitual mournful look that had for two weeks saddened her still child-like face.

"You are a man I were trustworthy," she ventured, winningly, yet not without that indefinable sense of the distance between mistress and menial. "Do you think you to be trusted?"

There was unspeakable appeal was out, and to an utter stranger, who might be anybody—anything. And still—

CHAPTER VII.

A WAITER WITH WEAK EYES.

The new waiter regarded Miss Gore so ardently that probably it was well the smoked glasses hid the meanings that were latent in his eyes.

"Trust me!" he echoed earnestly. "I hope, miss, that I may be trusted, for I say it yes—fully and completely."

Some sort of doubt, foreshadowing itself in her expression, caused him to quickly, yet with great respect, add:

"Please to let me bring your luncheon into the library and wait on you there. I will prove to you that I am sincere."

Though she did not reply she moved towards the room alluded to, and retiring, the waiter soon appeared there, bearing a tray with various eatables and drinkables, which he rather awkwardly arranged on a small table in a retired recess. Then he opened a bottle of claret. She, wearily watching, smiled slightly.

"You do not appear to be a practiced hand," she ventured, half absently, to say.

"Perhaps not, miss," placing a chair for her, then drawing deferentially back. "Waiting at table is not alone what I am here for, though I am here to serve you. Please believe that, ma'am."

Looking up, the girl almost screamed as she saw the strange waiter, at his last word, suddenly divest his eyes of the smoked glasses and his head of its dense shock curls, disclosing a pair of keen gray eyes and close cropped light hair. The eyes were not weak and the hand looked brainy and well-shaped. Miss Gore became deathly pale.

"You recognise me, then?"

"You—you are—the young man—who—" She hesitated.

"I am the reporter who was arrested by a mistake on the night of your father's death, and whom you so kindly yet truly spoke to when appearances were strongly against his uttered protest."

"I thought when you removed your glasses. A pause. "Nor have I changed my views as then expressed," she added slowly.

"I thank you, miss, most sincerely, for your confidence. May I never lose it. But I lost my place on my paper through the blunder."

"I am sorry. Then you had to do something. For a purpose, and—but what a pity that nothing better availed you than a servant's place."

"I sought it voluntarily, ma'am, in order to acquire another and more responsible position."

Miss Gore looked up from the cutlet she was about to eat, and overpowered her nerves with a swallow of the rare old Chateau-Margaux. "What would he say next?

"I—hardly understand, I fear. Another position?"

"Permit me to explain. Assuming to be but what I am not attracted no attention here, will it not enable me to better accomplish two things?"

The girl dropped her knife and fork. His eyes held her eyes as a magnet attracts the needle.

"Don't you see, miss? I could best prove that I am not guilty myself, by getting the design of those who wish to do you harm. As a servant I can overhear much, and have I also have a surer chance to fix proof on such criminal and prove to everybody my own innocence. And that you—"

"Yes, yes—what then?" she hastened to urge, almost in the excited confidence in herself.

"Why, I might be reinstated in my old job on that paper again."

At this they both laughed, contagiously; then the new waiter, somewhat abashed, resume and stood deferentially at the back of her chair while he finished his unexcited recital of certain events the reader already knows about. And that was all the tragedy had she felt like smiling before, was entirely unwise, from the first the almost friendless daughter of the dead financier. Such the fluid implicity.

"When," continued Harwood, "I saw what this cousin and nephew was really up to, I could fix up my part fully. Instead of a scoop for my paper I was stopped from it, re gaining my credit as a live newspaper man by finding out who killed your father. Then I will put your person and property beyond the reach of your cousin and his tool, Blunt that his first judgment was hasty. If you authorize me to go ahead you can count on Harry Harwood as long as he can count on himself. Do you know how long that is, miss?"

Ellinor knew she was blushing. She sipped at her wine glass.

"It is just as long as I have your—your confidence, your trust, your faith, that I am worthy."

"I said I believed in you. I do still. More, I will do so always."

He longed to say, "You make me too happy," but he restrained himself in good manner, and murmured unintelligibly as he changed the dishes, even more clumsily than he had waited on her before.

"Rich as I seem to be in mere money, hardly a man in the world is more friendless, true, truthful friends, I mean."

"Once more I believe you," she answered that you, whatever my luck, good or bad, will never have one more sincere, more devoted friend than Ellinor Gore."

Again he managed to pull up this side of downright familiarity, as another busy pair of dishes, adding:

"I will take these down again to divert suspicion. The cross-eyed butler hired me only yesterday and is on the watch. I am to his notion a treasure. He knows I'm not do anything, make no move whatever until you see me again."

Then with a most profound obeisance he glided away. Miss Gore regarded one of her hands, which he had kissed in the library with a lighter step and heart than those terrible days of darkness had known, so the inquest verdict ran—had robbed her of her father.

"Did he—" she murmured. "I do believe the poor fellow wanted to kiss my hand. The idea!" But she was not displeased.

Meanwhile, in a room below, a cross-eyed man had just been arrested in the gesture in one of the steel hot-air flues leading from the furnace to the library recess where the luncheon was served, and as the winter weather, the flues, though not in use, were open for purposes of ventilation. Hence this unseen listener was deaf, nothing was to prevent his hearing pretty much all that passed above. He himself was a burly, scratched his semi-bald head and wrinkled the creases between his narrow eyes.

"Tut, tut!" he muttered. "What kind of a lark is all this?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT CROSS-EYED BUTLER.

Sure enough, this was the one servant, more than all others, on whom Tarleton VanLear relied for that knowledge of deception and fraud. His bribed and salaried creature, a dark, sharp-visaged, broad-faced, purple-complexioned man, who walked softly about his duties as if he was stepping on eggs. Gliding softly towards the kitchen when the new waiter was putting down his tray of dishes, he said:

"Come with me, you Tony. I want you at the sideboard."

He led the way to a small brick outhouse near the carriage exit to an alley at the rear, unlocked the heavy door and pointed at some baskets of picked anthracite in the further corner.

"In with you," ordered the butler. "We want some of that for the servants' hall. Then——"

A bang behind the waiter's back, who had already entered, interrupted. When the man wheeled, the strong door was already shut, and he heard the grind of the key in the lock. The waiter was a prisoner.

"Open that door!" he shouted, and flung his weight and strength against it, but in vain. "Open, I say!"

He heard the cross-eyed butler's sullen laugh, and he again flung himself uselessly against the heavy portals.

"Take it easy, Tony, until the master comes," said his captor. "Shielding won't help you one bit. He will talk to you better than I can."

"What—the—devil means? Unlock that door."

"When you want to talk to the young misses, as isn't right in her head, anyway, you had better close the conference—see?"

The exposed "Tony" heard him chuckle to himself as he walked off, his ponderous, cattlike tread, shuffling along the bricks towards the house.

Several hours passed. Harwood fumed, fretted, and tried in vain to extricate himself from the cramped position, after preparing for another attempt at self-rescue later. The cold was bitter, and the night came on. Then through the steel bars of a narrow transom he saw the city lights appear. Then steps near, the lock again creaked, the door slightly opened and he heard the butler's gruff mumble.

"Master have not yet come home. So I bring you a bite of supper. Little as ye deserve the like. Come here and gift it, or you will do without till breakfast."

"Bring it along," cried he as if just aroused from slumber. "Ha-hum! I must have been asleep. Ah, my back—and my leg. Please, sir, would you mind setting the dish on that box by the door? I can hardly move."

Grumbling at Tony's lenience, the butler put one foot on the bench the box was on when Harry sprang noiselessly forward.

Instantly the cross-eyed man was stumbling at the door-sill, measured his length on the floor, shattering the plate and scattering the food. Harry knew not that the small of his back, strong hands gripped that dangling leg, thrust, for good measure, deeply into his mouth, was drawn painfully to the floor. Then he plunged into the house from his rubicund scalp as Harwood the receipt of a thwart his head until it was securely clutched in each of his wrists.

He struggled, kicked, gurgled, but the man's wrists were snapped together in a pair of steel bracelets the gurgle was choked by a gag of his own handkerchief, thanked his stars he had about his person ever since the notion had possessed him to search the house fully. Instead of a scoop for my paper I was stopped from it, re gaining my credit as a live newspaper man by finding out who killed your father. Then I will put your person and property beyond the reach of your cousin and his tool, Blunt that his first judgment was hasty. If you authorize me to go ahead you can count on Harry Harwood as long as he can count on himself. Do you know how long that is, miss?"

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Again he managed to pull up this side of downright familiarity, as another busy pair of dishes, adding:

"I will take these down again to divert suspicion. The cross-eyed butler hired me only yesterday and is on the watch. I am to his notion a treasure. He knows I'm not do anything, make no move whatever until you see me again."

Then with a most profound obeisance he glided away. Miss Gore regarded one of her hands, which he had kissed in the library with a lighter step and heart than those terrible days of darkness had known, so the inquest verdict ran—had robbed her of her father.

"Did he—" she murmured. "I do believe the poor fellow wanted to kiss my hand. The idea!" But she was not displeased.

Meanwhile, in a room below, a cross-eyed man had just been arrested in the gesture in one of the steel hot-air flues leading from the furnace to the library recess where the luncheon was served, and as the winter weather, the flues, though not in use, were open for purposes of ventilation. Hence this unseen listener was deaf, nothing was to prevent his hearing pretty much all that passed above. He himself was a burly, scratched his semi-bald head and wrinkled the creases between his narrow eyes.

"Tut, tut!" he muttered. "What kind of a lark is all this?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT CROSS-EYED BUTLER.

Sure enough, this was the one servant, more than all others, on whom Tarleton VanLear relied for that knowledge of deception and fraud. His bribed and salaried creature, a dark, sharp-visaged, broad-faced, purple-complexioned man, who walked softly about his duties as if he was stepping on eggs. Gliding softly towards the kitchen when the new waiter was putting down his tray of dishes, he said:

"Come with me, you Tony. I want you at the sideboard."

He led the way to a small brick outhouse near the carriage exit to an alley at the rear, unlocked the heavy door and pointed at some baskets of picked anthracite in the further corner.

"In with you," ordered the butler. "We want some of that for the servants' hall. Then——"

A bang behind the waiter's back, who had already entered, interrupted. When the man wheeled, the strong door was already shut, and he heard the grind of the key in the lock. The waiter was a prisoner.

"Open that door!" he shouted, and flung his weight and strength against it, but in vain. "Open, I say!"

He heard the cross-eyed butler's sullen laugh, and he again flung himself uselessly against the heavy portals.

"Take it easy, Tony, until the master comes," said his captor. "Shielding won't help you one bit. He will talk to you better than I can."

"What—the—dye mean? Unlock that door."

"When you want to talk to the young misses, as isn't right in her head, anyway, you had better close the conference—see?"

The exposed "Tony" heard him chuckle to himself as he walked off, his ponderous, cattlike tread, shuffling along the bricks towards the house.

Several hours passed. Harwood fumed, fretted, and tried in vain to extricate himself from the cramped position, after preparing for another attempt at self-rescue later. The cold was bitter, and the night came on. Then through the steel bars of a narrow transom he saw the city lights appear. Then steps near, the lock again creaked, the door slightly opened and he heard the butler's gruff mumble.

"Master have not yet come home. So I bring you a bite of supper. little as ye deserve the like. Come here and gift it, or you will do without till breakfast."

"Bring it along," cried he as if just aroused from slumber. "Ha-hum! I must have been asleep. Ah, my back—and my leg. Please, sir, would you mind setting the dish on that box by the door? I can hardly move."

Grumbling at Tony's lenience, the butler put one foot on the bench the box was on when Harry sprang noiselessly forward.

Instantly the cross-eyed man was stumbling at the door-sill, measured his length on the floor, shattering the plate and scattering the food. Harry knew not that the small of his back, strong hands gripped that dangling leg, thrust, for good measure, deeply into his mouth, was drawn painfully to the floor. Then he plunged into the house from his rubicund scalp as Harwood the receipt of a thwart his head until it was securely clutched in each of his wrists.

He struggled, kicked, gurgled, but the man's wrists were snapped together in a pair of steel bracelets the gurgle was choked by a gag of his own handkerchief, thanked his stars he had about his person ever since the notion had possessed him to search the house fully. Instead of a scoop for his own vindication and to serve the safety for your father's murderers and your father's reeking corpse that she believed the police would have almost against him—a stranger within the gates.

"Now, my man," said Harry, binding the fellow's feet and tying him like a log to the rear, "some one ought to take my place and look after your interests. Where shown up. Who so deserving as you? You may think you have again failed me today, but he may as well know what I am up to with him, that Tony, the new waiter, don't like him. Too accustomed for one of his retiring and modest habits. But your master will be glad to have one in control of the house on his trail, soon enough, if he fails to let him up his devilish dealings with Miss Gore and her interests. You know what I mean. Ta, ta, Jeeves—see you later."

The bound and gagged and unwrapped until as helpless as an infant in arms, without the possibility of escape, remained.

Harwood locked the door, threw the key into the adjacent sewer, but instead of escaping further by way of the stables and alley, boldly re-entered the servants' quarters of the house, and still in his waiter's garb, which he had somewhat smoothed and neatened, sat down in the hall.

That leer-eyed chump has probably said nothing," he concluded, from the butler's double allusion to Miss Gore's continued absence. "Mgat as well make sure of all I can, though."

Avoiding the kitchen and the cook, he entered softly, found that the first floor was in darkness, and crept on to the second, where he met Miss Gore's maid, who was just on her way out.

"That leer-eyed chump has probably said nothing," he concluded, from the butler's double allusion to Miss Gore's continued absence. "Mgat as well make sure of all I can, though."

Avoiding the kitchen and the cook, he entered softly, found that the first floor was in darkness, and crept on to the second, where he met Miss Gore's maid, who was just on her way out.

"I'm only Tony," said he. "What is the matter with Miss Gore, your mistress? Cook wishes to send up supper, I think."

"Cook must be crazy," commented the woman, totally at sea as to Tony's sudden appearance. "My mistress has had a cup of tea, I think, and—and she be a walking in the square till our master come."

"Sure, I'd forgotten. So long. I have other things to do."

And he returned below, leaving the maid in doubt if she was awake or not.

One minute in his own little closet, next Harry servants' hall below, and he presently in street coat and hat looking more like the young, young man about town than Tony the waiter. His trip pocket lighted with a small Smith & Wesson hammerless. He left the house by the basement, and presently entered one of the little private squares, such as one sees here and there in the uptown residential district of Manhattan.

There she was, slowly sauntering under

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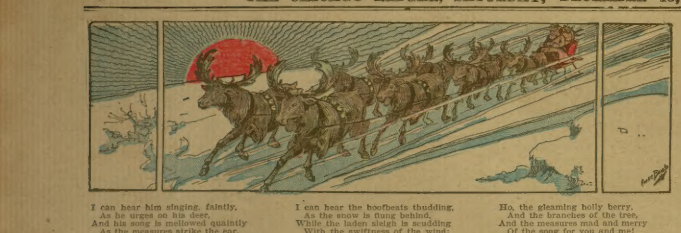
THE DOLLS are NEARLY HALF A YARD TALL, are beautifully dressed in the latest fashion, have curly hair, shoes and stockings that can be taken off, and finest eyes. SEND NO MONEY. Simply write your name and address and we will send you the 10 packages of pictures. WHEN SOLD SEND US THE MONEY which you get, and we will send you the premium you select. Everybody will be glad to buy one or more pictures as they resemble MUCH higher priced pictures in coloring. Some are shown in this paper. Write us today and we will send you 10 packages of pictures and will tell you how to sell them. Address, MYER ART CO., Dept. 90, Chicago, Ill.

(Continued on page fourteen.)



I can hear him singing, faintly,
As he urges on his deer,
And his song is mellowed quaintly
As the measures strike the ear,
But the lilt of it is jolly,
And the words of it are gay:
"Get the mistletoe and holly;
I have started on the way."

I can hear the hoofbeats thudding,
As the snow is flung behind,
While the laden sleigh is scudding
With the swiftness of the wind;
And the echoes now are flinging
Broken murmurs of the song
That old Santa Claus is singing
While the reindeer speed along.

Ho, the gleaming holly berry,
And the branches of the tree,
And the measures mad and merry
Of the song for you and me!
Fur and fabric, fit waxing clearer,
Comes the whirring of the whip,
While the good old saint draws nearer
With "Merry Christmas" on his lip.

SANTA CLAUS' WONDERFUL AUTO.

By ROSALIE ARTHUR.

Nettie and Olaf stood in front of their funny little round house and snuggled down into their fur robes. The wind blew outlingly across the ice-bound sea, and the white waste of land.

"Hush," said Nettie, "I hear bells."

"No, you don't. It's the wind—no, it isn't, Nettie!" cried Olaf excitedly, "but I never heard such a sound."

On the air rose a buzzing like that of millions of bees, or like the whirling of the wings of wild geese as they fly over the ice-floes.

Olaf and Nettie clung to each other.

"O, what is it? what is it?" they cried.

Just then around a curve came a strange, terrible thing, all red and brass, with a great blazing eye in front, and Olaf and Nettie fled shrieking into their hut.

"They heard a voice.

Merry Christmas to all,
And to all, a good-night!

"It's Santa," whispered little Nettie.

Olaf crept to the round hole that served for a doorway.

In His Hand He Carried Some Neatly Wrapped Bundles.

"It isn't," he said, as he plunged back again in great fright. "It's an awful thing with big round eyes that sure like a sea lion's in the dark, only bigger."

"I believe I have heard those dear children," mused Santa, as he swept over white hillocks and across the ice-floes.

For it was really Santa Claus, in a brand new automobile. Mrs. Claus had persuaded him that the sleigh was old-fashioned and the deer too slow, and had induced him to buy the beautiful machine.

Presently Santa left the Far North and came to a warmer atmosphere.

Now, in one of the big cities of the South there lived a small girl and her brother, Ruth, like Nettie and Olaf, were anxious to see Santa Claus.

"I am going to keep awake Christmas Eve—maybe all night," Reggie had announced to Ruth.

"O Reggie, do you think you could?" Ruth had asked in an awed tone.

"Yes," said Reggie, "I am going to wrap up in a blanket and sit in the chimney corner and when I hear the sleigh bells I am going to peek out."

"Well, if you can, I can," said Ruth; and so on Christmas Eve the two children huddled close under a chimney corner.

"It's a jolly good thing that father built our new house with open fireplaces," said Reggie, "I wonder what Santa does in flats."

"Why, he just climbs down the air shaft," said Ruth. "Nurse told me this morning."

"I guess he don't bother with flats much," said Reggie, "for no children are allowed in them anyway."

Just as the clock struck twelve there came a sound from without.

"Hush!" whispered Reggie, and squeezed Ruth's hand, for that small young woman had dropped to sleep.

"O, it's only an old automobile on the street," said Reggie as he heard the clang of a gong and the whirr of an electric motor.

But that was where he was mistaken, for the auto was on the roof and not on the street, and Santa was clambering out and selecting a doll for Ruth and a set of dishes, and a punching bag and a pair of boxing gloves for Reggie.

Then he dropped down the chimney.

Ruth and Reggie held their breaths. They knew just how he would look with his red fur-trimmed suit, his little round cap with a bit of holly in it, with his long white beard and his pack on his back.

There was a thud, a rattling of coals as Santa hit the scuttle in his descent, and then the children gave a dismayed gasp.

"It's a burglar," chattered Reggie under his breath, as he beheld a short figure in a fur-lined rain coat, with a visored cap pulled down over his goggled eyes.

The children shivered. There was no pack on his back, but in his hands he carried some neatly wrapped bundles.

These he laid on the table, as he spied the children.

"A Merry Christmas, little folks," he said genially. "So you have caught me, have you?"

But they shrank away from him. "We were looking for Santa Claus," faltered Reggie.

"Well, that is my name. I have on a new rig, but it's the same old saint," said Santa.

But Ruth would not listen.

"O, it isn't Santa, Reggie," she sobbed. "It's just some old Sherlock Holmes or somebody, or like that, who is pretending. O, go away. Go away."

And poor Santa went.

Everywhere he had the same experience. Children who had propped their eyes open, refused to accept him in his new costume.

"I want my old Santa. I want my old Santa," wailed one small girl, and shrieked as Santa tried to pet her.

"O, I give it up," said Santa ruefully, and he put on speed, and went straight back to the Far North.

And there he changed his suit for the dear old red tunic, and hitched his deer to the old sleigh and started back.

Now Dasher, now Dancer,
Now Prancer and Vixen,
On Comet, on Cupid,
On Donner and Blitzen,

he shouted as he cracked his whip and sped through the villages, and Nettie and Olaf heard him and ran out to see, and clapped their hands and were happy again, and all the little children of the Far North heard the jingle of bells and wondered why Santa was so late.

And that is why so many presents were delayed on that Christmas, for it is a very long journey to the Far North and back.

But Reggie and Ruth never sat up again on Christmas Eve.

"If Santa looks like that," said Reggie stoutly, when he found his boxing gloves and the punching bag, "I prefer not to see him."

"So do I," said Ruth, as she rocked her doll.

HER GIFT.

"And so," he said—a glad light filled his eyes—
"This is from her—made by her soft hands
Ah, here is something I shall always prize—
I wonder what it is? I wish I knew.

"These dainty edges by her finger tips
Were deftly turned and brodered—all for me!"
He pressed it, sweetly scented, to his lips.

He carried some neatly wrapped bundles.

A PERIPATETIC XMAS GIFT.

Some years ago a Christmas gift
Was sent me, but alas!
It was a thing no use to me,
And so it came to pass,
On thrifty thoughts intent, I laid
It carefully away,
And sent it to a bosom friend
Of mine next Christmas day.

Since then, as surely as the snows
In fleecy beauty fall,
And mistletoe and holly wreaths
Are hung upon the wall,
By mail, express or messenger,
Each second year, alack!
When Christmas gifts are going round
I get that present back.

"PROUD AND GLAD"

Because Mother Looked So Well After Quitting Coffee.

An Ohio woman was almost distracted with coffee dyspepsia and heart trouble. Like thousands of others, the drug in coffee—caffeine—was slowly but steadily undermining her nervous system and interfering with natural digestion of food.

"For thirty years," she writes, "I have used coffee. Have always been sickly—had heart trouble and dyspepsia, with sours in stomach and mouth so bad sometimes, I was almost distracted and could hardly eat a thing for a week.

"I could not sleep for nervousness, and when I would lie down at night the cold cup of coffee and my heart would trouble me. At last, when I would want to drink coffee, it would gag me. It was like poison to me. I was thin—only weighed 115 lbs., when I quit coffee and began to use Postum.

"From the first day that belching and burning in my stomach stopped. The Postum went down so easy and pleasant. I could sleep as soundly as any baby, and after the first month, whenever I met my friends they would ask me what was making me so fleshy and look so well.

"Sometimes, before I could answer quick enough, one of my friends would say, 'Why, that is what Postum is doing for her'—they were all so proud and glad.

"When I recommend it to any one I always tell them to be sure and boil it well, using Postum, as it is not good to taste if weak. Boil full 15 minutes. Be careful enough to get the flavor and rich brown color." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

His Economical System.

"Buy my Christmas presents early? Not much. I always wait until the last moment."

"Why?"

"Because I am sure to forget something and that's just so much saved."

Santa Claus Has a Gun This Year

A special wireless telegram from the North Pole advises us that Santa Claus this year is loaded down with guns, not only for boys and girls, but for the boys and girls of larger growth—in fact, for all who enjoy a little in the open and who desire to train the hand and eye to accuracy in the wholesome sports of hunting and target shooting.

We presume that Santa Claus has been stirred up particularly by the advertising of the Stevens Rifles and Shot Guns that are appearing in our advertising columns about this time. If you will take a look at them you will not wonder why Santa Claus chooses Stevens Firearms for his presents this year.

If you are interested to learn about the wide range of manufacture in Stevens Firearms, their high grade quality, popular prices and suitability for young or old of either sex, read the advertisements and send for the handsome Christmas catalogue which they offer.

More Frenzied Finance.

"Here's an article," said the assistant editor, who was busy with a pile of manuscript, "on 'The Inner Workings of a Bank.'"

"Is it from an ex-banker in Joliet or an ex-burglar?" queried the editor.

Hope for Asthmatics.

NEW YORK, Friday.—The thousands who suffer from asthma, catarrh and hay fever will hail with delight the news that a remedy has at last been found which will not only relieve the distress attending these diseases, but will completely and permanently cure. The new discovery, known as Cyrenius, has been marvellously successful in the most obstinate cases, and in order that personal may become more widely known throughout the country, the Paris Drug Company, 147 to 153 3rd st., New York, are supplying pemance free of charge to any one who writes to them for it.

Too Expensive.

Reggy—And you mean to say you are not engaged to Miss DePiyer? Why, I heard her say for two pins she would accept you.

Gussie (gloomily)—Yes; but I found out she meant diamond pins.

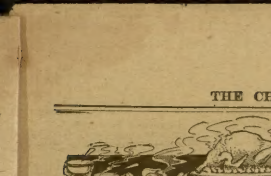
Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, such as freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Hinkeville, Pa.

Mrs. Jones—Why, Mrs. Smith, I thought you were in mourning.

Mrs. Smith—I was, but I've changed my mind.



The Ball of the Snow Fairies.

By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

Once upon a time, a dear little girl named Flossie was invited to go to a Christmas party, but when the day came the snow was falling so fast that Flossie's mamma said she must stay at home. The little girl felt very sad, and she could not help crying, although, as she was a good girl, she never thought of speaking naughty to her mamma, but went over to the window and stood looking out at the snow.

She had never thought before how pretty the snowflakes looked, but walle she was standing there she saw that each flake was apart from the rest. She began to look up, and she saw the white things come down, so soft and beautiful, that she clapped her hands and began to laugh instead of crying, which is always a good thing to do.

"You dear little snowflakes, I love you," she said, stretching out her hands and then kissing them to the snowflakes.

Suddenly she heard such a sweet voice, clear and tiny, say:

"We love you, too."

Flossie looked about the room, but did not see anyone, so she went to the door of the little voice again, and, then Flossie looked at the snow and said to it—what do you think? Why the most beautiful little Princess, all white and sparkling, just outside the window.

"Who are you?" Flossie asked, but she felt she knew, for the little Princess had a lovely crown of pearls on her hair, which was as golden as Flossie's own. There were two bright blue eyes beneath the hair, and a pretty little mouth, ah, so tiny. Her lovely dress was made of some kind of some beautiful cloth, and underneath her trained dress were two wings, trimmed with pearls. In her hand was a little gold wand, and on the top was a pearl.

"Who am I?" asked the little Princess, who was just about as tall as a pin. "I am Prince Snowflake, and I have come to play with you because you could not go to the Christmas party."

"Goody, goody," Flossie cried, clapping her hands.

"Yes, I have come and brought some of my friends with me," Princess Snowflake said, and she was a very good girl. We do not come to bad children, but we love good ones."

"Was I good?" Flossie asked, trembling with joy because the little Princess said what she did in so sweet a voice.

"Yes, you were, and if you will open the window a little, I and my friends will come and we will have a nice party to ourselves."

Flossie was then interested in the Princess that she had not noticed any other visitors, but, creeping on the window sill, were about a hundred of these lovely little people, dressed in white, and all smiling and nodding at her.

Flossie opened the window just a little bit, and she had to, for now her mamma would not want it left open, and the little snow fairies gathered about her on a small round table which stood by the window. It made such a nice little ballroom for them, and after they had spoken to Flossie, the Princess Snowflake said:

"Shall we dance for you?"

"Oh, will you?" Flossie asked. She had never imagined there could be such lovely little people.

"Of course we will. Come, musicians, and play for us." The Princess said, speaking in her sweet, kind little voice, and then Flossie saw that the tiny fairy fan with violins: one little fairy man with a guitar, and a dear fairy girl with mandolin. From somewhere she did not know what place, appeared some chairs, so little that they would have fitted no grown people, these wonderful snow fairies, and the musicians sat down in them and began to play such sweet dance music.

Then, while Flossie held her breath, the snow fairies began the ball. Each gentleman fairy bowed to a lady fairy, with his tiny hand on his heart, and asked her to honor him with a dance, and each lady fairy replied:

"I will be pleased," and then the couples danced away to the music of a waltz.

All these dear little people had such beautiful clothes. Flossie remembered seeing lovely colors in the snow when one time the sun shone through it. Now she understood that what she had seen was the clothes of these dear little fairies.

"How do you like our party?" Princess Snowflake asked as she danced with Prince Snowflake, and Flossie said, trying to look as happy and sweet as the fairies:

"It is the nicest ball that ever danced," and then they all laughed to think of a ball dancing.

After they finished the waltz, the Prince and Princess Snowflake went up to thank the little musicians, and Flossie saw how kindly they spoke to their subjects, and she was taught a good lesson that great people do not want to hurt the feelings of those who work for them.

The fairies were so sweet and good to each other and to Flossie, and danced again and again, and now and then one of the dear little couples would dance right up against Flossie's face, and give her soft, fluttering kisses, for they were trying in every way to make her enjoy herself.

At last the Princess Snowflake said:

"Now, dear little Flossie, we have spent such a nice afternoon with you, and we hope you have with us."

"Yes, dear Prince, Princess and other fairies, I have," Flossie said, trying to be just as polite as the fairies.

"Thank you," they all said, bowing their tiny heads, and the musicians waved their instruments at her.

Then Princess Snowflake continued:

"It is time for us to go, but we will form a grand march, only the Prince Snowflake and I will be last. As we dance out of the window, which you must raise, we will kiss the nicest little girl we know," and as she spoke, the tiny musicians, standing on the wind, played beautifully, and the little dancers flew by, each one kissing Flossie, and perhaps that is why she did not see where the chairs went to.

At last they all were outside, except the Prince and Princess Snowflake, and they each gave her several kisses, and then just as the last of the others, Flossie heard the Princess' sweet voice say:

"Look, darling little Flossie," and then she saw Prince Snowflake kiss her, for each flake as it came down, contained in its heart a beautiful little fairy, and each one of them was kissing a tiny hand and all were smiling a Merry Christmas at Flossie.

THE CHRISTMAS THEFT.

'Twas dusky in the small way
Through which Miss Mah must pass
To gain the lighted hallway,
The witching hour was
I sat in dreams of rapture,
In visionings of bliss,
For, sooth, I hoped to capture
From her a kiss!

That man has reached a sad age
Who's such sweet theft above:
"All's fair"—you know the adage—
"In war and love."
And day-dreams had this merry
Maid, with her cheeks aglow,
Fled from the waxen berry—
The mistletoe.

A step—my heart beat faster—
And then in my embrace
A form like a pilaster
In silk and lace!
Horror swept maiden o'er me:
A scream—a wrench—a pant—
And furious stood before me—
Mab's maiden aunt!

CHRISTMAS CANDY.

A girl who was famous among friends and family for her skill in candy-making, found herself perplexed upon one Christmas of an almost empty purse and a long Christmas list.

There was only one thing for it—either to give some of her candy, or to abandon the idea of giving presents at all. Somehow, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without giving, so the candy won the day.

Fortunately, she knew plenty of kinds to make. For days before Christmas she was busy getting the things ready. Nuts had to be shelled and blanched; harmonious colors secured, and the prettiest little boxes and baskets made of crinkled tissue paper, pasteboard, or of heavy water-color paper, decorated prettily with water-color paints.

The day before Christmas she shut herself up in the kitchen, with pans and kettles and plates around, and everything ready "to her hand" for the work.

Her fudges were many and varied. Some made exactly like chocolate fudge (with the chocolate left out), were a delicious invention of her own. A pinch of an experiment one day when she wanted to make candy and found she had no chocolate. Two cups of sugar, one of milk, and a good tablespoonful of butter were put in a double boiler and allowed to boil for five minutes, then taken off the fire and beaten until the boiling syrup was quite or slightly stiff. Into the mixture was poured a cupful of finely chopped nuts and a half teaspoonful of vanilla: it was stirred again quickly and turned out to cool.

Leaving out the nuts and adding half a cake of bitter chocolate made the most delicious chocolate fudge. When some of her chocolate fudge turned out an apparent failure, she dumped into it a cup of molasses, put it all on to boil up for five minutes, and turned out a batch of caramels.

Maple sugar fudge she made by boiling two cups of crushed maple sugar with one of cream. But it was a wonder to get just right, and, unlike the chocolate fudge, stayed a failure when it turned out that way.

Chocolate fudge poured over a thick layer of chopped marshmallows made a fudge variation that was immensely popular, partly because the marshmallows offset the cloying sweetness of the fudge.

But the newest form of fudge was made with honey and cream, using equal proportions and beating "extra hard."

Fudge biscuit she made for the girls who were at boarding schools, and who couldn't get home for the holidays. She cooked them in small cracker tins. They were simply small crackers, spread thickly with fudge, with another cracker laid on top.

With fondant as a foundation, all sorts of interesting cream candies and bonbons were made. To make this fondant, she put two cups of granulated sugar, half a cup of water and a pinch of cream of tartar into a double boiler, letting it boil until it when dropped in cold water formed into a soft ball between her fingers. This was hard to do, for the moment when it is boiled enough to form, instead of separating, is the moment when the mixture begins to get stiff. She let it cool, and then stirred it until it grew white, then turned it out and worked it, like a batch of bread, until every lump was out of it and it was a smooth lot of cream.

Some of it she flavored with vanilla and rolled into balls, in which she put a nut in the center) and dipped into chocolate. Using a fork to do so, she took loop on the end for dipping. The chocolate was a sweetened kind, melted and kept soft by standing in hot water.

These were the beginnings. From them sprung a pretty pink and white peppermint bonbons, dipping balls of the cream in the tinted cream. Peppermint cream and chocolate-covered peppermints were made by adding a few drops of oil of peppermint to the fondant, and coloring the mixture by the addition of essence of wintergreen.

Everybody loves a good deal of delicious. Half a pound each of butter and granulated sugar were boiled for fifteen minutes, and poured out in buttered tins.

Her fondant ran short before she came to the end of the list, so walnuts, which had been carefully shelled to keep the halves unbroken, were put in a saucepan with sugar and cream together until it was of the consistency of the fondant, flavored it with vanilla, and put half on a dish with walnut on each side.

It was a hard day's work, with results in the shape of burns and blisters, a face very much tanned by the kitchen stoves; but when the various kinds were sorted, and packed in their pretty receptacles, her gift was "loomed up a value all," as her small sister (and general helper) observed.

Amusing Christmas Games.

"Penny Bun."—The player comes to a shop to buy a penny bun. He finds the baker, and behind him, in a row, holding on to one another's waists, are the butcher, the chocolate, the sponge cake, and all the other things in the shop. But the player does not want any of them; he "must" have the plain penny bun that is in the very end of the row. The baker will not be disturbed for such a small matter; he says the buyer must get his bun from himself. "Can you see it?" says the poor buyer. Then the baker says "Is the bun table, or the bun carpet, or on the shelf, but the buyer is not satisfied. At last the baker says: "It is at the back of the oven." "Is it?" says "oven," off starts the buyer to seize his bun, and off starts the bun, turning on the other side of the row to reach the baker. Of course the shop-keeper won't allow bun to pass through them, so he has to run all the way round. If he catches the bun before he reaches the baker he gets one baker's place, and the bun becomes the baker. But if the bun has to run too far a forfeit and try again, while the little bun turns into the baker, and the last of the row becomes the bun.

"The Surprise."—All the children except one stand in a circle with their hands behind them, the palms turned outwards. All keep their eyes shut. The person to whom the looked-up a forfeit would be the punishment. The one who is left out runs round and round the circle carrying a handkerchief, which, after a time, he quietly slips into the hands of one of those in the circle, who, without saying a word, immediately runs off, followed by all the players. The one touched must run away as quickly as possible, and is pursued by the handkerchief-bearer, who has been on the lookout to see who would be touched by the handkerchief. The pursuer catches the runaway they change places, but if the fugitive can run round the circle in the circle untouched, the handkerchief-bearer must pay the forfeit.

The Turkey's Song.

They stuff me all through life and then
In death they stuff me once again;
Like Roman gladiator, they
Kill me to make a holiday.
They talk about the rights of man,
My rights they do not seem to scan,
But when they feel real thankful, lo!
They take an ax and lay me low.
Alas! I am not very keen
A lion or a whip-poor-will,
Or zebra, or a dog or horse,
For no one eats those things, of course,
But ah! a turkey I was born,
And so they stuff me full of corn;
And then they save their appetite
Until I am just fattened right.
O, children! Listen to my word
And do not be a turkey bird,
But be as good as you can be
So that you will not end like me.

ANNOUNCEMENT EXTRAORDINARY

The management of the Chicago Ledger herewith extends to its hundreds of thousands of readers the wish that they may enjoy a Merry Christmas and New Year 1907 is hoped to have. The managers wish to express their thanks to the army of friends for their patronage during the year just closing, a patronage that is extraordinary and unprecedented, unequaled by any publication in the country. In view of this tremendous endorsement of the Ledger, the management feels encouraged to make extraordinary efforts to please its readers during the year that is now approaching. For the readers of the Ledger during 1907 a magnificent array of good things has already been prepared. It is there on hand awaiting the time when it is to be published. It consists of stories, stories that will thrill and enthrall you. In short, stories that will hold you in breathless interest from the beginning to the end. Below is given a partial list of the great stories that will appear in the Ledger during the year 1907.

STORIES OF LOVE AND SENTIMENT.

BLUEBEARD'S SECRET.....By Mrs. Alexander
A FATAL FLIRTATION.....By Gertrude Osborne
THE STRANGE WORDS OF LOUIE FAIRFAX.....By Emma Howard Wight
THE DAMNATION OF THERESA LOLLOZ.....By Mrs. Alexander
THE MYSTERIOUS GOVERNESS.....By Adrienne Rossette
THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER.....By Annie Browning

DETECTIVE STORIES.

HOUSE OF THE MIDNIGHT SOUND.....By J. Breckenridge Ellis
A DETECTIVE'S RUSE.....By H. M. Frederick
THE TURNING POINT IN A LIFE.....By Will Lisenbee
A BEAUTIFUL FIEND.....By Mrs. Alexander
TWO FACES UNDER ONE HAT.....By Cora H. E. Scott

STORIES OF MYSTERY.

THE HOUSE OF PERIL.....By George Waterman
A COWARD'S VENGEANCE.....By Mrs. Alexander
TURUSOS'S DOOM.....By William Perry Brown
THE UNWRITTEN LAW.....By Emma Howard Wight

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

THE TREASURE SEEKERS.....By William M. Manning
WINNING THE WILD WEST.....By H. M. Frederick
THE COUNTERFEIT HAWKINS.....By Clara Parker

PROBLEM STORIES.

AN HONEST LAWYER.....By Alvah Milton Kerr
AN INDIVIDUAL CASE.....By Lelloy Armstrong
A TRAMP IN SOCIETY.....By Edward Eggleston

BOYS' AND GIRLS' STORIES.

FALSE TO HIS TRUST.....By J. M. Merrill
BOB BARTON'S CAPITAL.....By Gertrude Morton
FIGHTING TO A FINISH.....By Roscoe Wallace
THE RIFT THAT CAUGHT COLBY.....By Bertha S. Stanley

OF GENERAL INTEREST.

PEN PICTURES OF RAILROAD LIFE.....By Albert H. Modjeska
STORIES OF A PULLMAN CAR.....By Albert H. Modjeska
and others.

Besides the big serial stories above enumerated, there will appear a large number of short stories, poems, sketches, humorous items, and striking illustrations. In short, the Ledger will continue to be one of the most valuable and entertaining periodicals published in the United States. In order that it may make any one a really lasting and pleasure-giving holiday present, place their name and address on a sheet of paper, enclose $1.00 for a year's subscription and make them happy. If you do not desire to do this, then subscribe for yourself or your family. Remember that for every subscription we give the Ledger and one of our King Cameras or any six of our model pictures as advertised on pages, thirteen and fifteen. Don't wait. Subscribe now for the New Year. Address,

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THE MYSTIC MISTLETOE.

From time immemorial the white-berried mistletoe has played a leading part in Yuletide festivities, though it has not always conveyed the sentimental privileges which give it its value in the eyes of the romantic youth of today. Like so many other features of the Christmas celebration, mistletoe has been borrowed from the pagans of antiquity and Christianized by the lapse of centuries. The Druids, before the birth of Christ used the mistletoe in their sacred rites, and in parts of India pagan priests still incorporate it in religious ritual. It figures largely in Scandinavian mythology. Baldur, the son of Odin, though a demigod, was slain by a spear of mistletoe, a proof of its magic powers.

It is from the Druids of old England, however, that mistletoe has come to us. The Druidical priests, says the story, as with the Magi of the East, the wise men who worshiped at the cradle of the infant Saviour, held the mistletoe as their most sacred possession, and the cutting of the pretty parasite from the oak, the tree which the Druids claimed God loved more than any other, was attended with the greatest solemnity. On the Druids' festival day a grand procession, headed by two white oxen, moved to the mystic grove. There the oxen were fastened to the oak by their horns, and a white-robed priest climbed into the leafless branches and cut the bunches of mistletoe with a golden knife. The oxen were then sacrificed and religious services performed, after which the procession returned to the temple in the forest and the mistletoe was deposited in the Druidical sanctum.

Besides taking its place in the religious observances of the Druids, the mistletoe, which the priests gave a name meaning "all healing," was made into many curious decoctions by processes which at certain seasons and incantations were supposed to add to its mysterious powers. These medicines were regarded as cures for human ills generally, whether of mind or body.

With the advance of civilization and the death of superstition mistletoe lost its religious character, but not its popularity, and the forests of England and of our own Southern States are as eagerly frequented by mistletoe gatherers as ever were the dark woods of the ancient Druids.

There is to be a sharp increase in the price of lead pencils. Has somebody found that there is a promising graft in graphite?

Alabama's next Legislature will contain one lone Republican. He will constitute a small but compact minority.

Possibly Mr. Hughes wears that beard in fulfillment of a rash vow made at some earlier period of his career.

A girl is pretty safe in marrying a young man whose mother can't cook.

Japan surely ought to feel easier after reading the message.

A Merry Christmas to everybody.

THE ONE DARK STAIN.

By MAJOR THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

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Begun in No. 48, Dec. 1. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

Boggess was sitting on a log near a campfire, idly watching the preparation of the evening meal. At least to outward appearances that was all he was doing. In reality, however, he was keeping one eye on the strange young man whom Martin had made one of the party. This young man was lounging on the grass, taking no notice of anything about him, and apparently totally unconcerned about Martin and what part he way it might wag.

Presently Martin came along and Boggess motioned him to a seat beside him. Martin sat down and drew a long sigh of relief, at the same time glancing furtively at the other's gaise. A little while they stood so, then Boggess, something with rage, cried:

"I see now that I am rich. You are planning against me. But I want to tell you right here that you never succeed. Perhaps you don't know it, but just the least thing you do will put me on my guard, any smart capers you will pay dearly for. I know some things about you that you no doubt would like to keep as a secret of your own."

Martin laughed lightly. He did not seem in the least disturbed. This was new to Boggess, who expected to see the man in the dust at his feet. He did not understand it, and he understood it still less when Martin said:

"It is an old saying, but a true one, that people who live in glass houses can not afford to throw stones. When it comes to stealing account I think I could do a little something in that way myself. I happen to know a few things about you that you wouldn't care to have known."

He paused a moment, then apparently ignoring Boggess, went on: "Ten years in State's prison is uncomfortable, but a few months with your neck in a noose is much worse."

CHAPTER XI.

Boggess started back as if he had been struck a hard blow. With wide eyes he looked quickly about him, and for a little while he was strangely affected. By a strong effort, however, he presently controlled himself, and he became quiet and steady said:

"I don't know what you mean. Martin, and I don't care, but I want to say that for all the good your threats will do you may as well quit them right now. You are perfectly welcome to tell any secret you know about me or my past, and whatever you say of me, so long as you confine yourself to the truth, I shall not say one word. Can you say as much?"

Martin grinned in Boggess' face.

"I don't know that I am afraid for the truth as you do," he said, "I could say almost anything."

"Do you mean to imply that I am lying?" Boggess demanded.

"Well, Martin replied with a shrug of his shoulders, "I am speaking the truth, so you ought to know that I am not one easily what my words imply."

Boggess looked at Martin steadily for a long time. Clearly he was puzzled at the conduct of the man who had so long been his humble servant, and unexplainable and uncomplainable tool. He could not understand why the man had so suddenly and completely changed about, and, worse yet, he had no idea to what extent he possessed power.

Martin had a past which he was not anxious to have known to the public. As Boggess had said, he had once been sent to service fa a State prison back East, and he had been in the institution through connivance of the authorities, and with two or three years of his sentence still to serve.

Boggess had come into possession of all these facts, in some way, and nobody knew how. He could not but feel uncomfortable in Martin, and by means of it had made him subservient to his will. For two years Martin had trembled and fawned, and had not dared to assert that his soul was his own.

And now, here he was, all of a sudden, not only openly asserting his mind, but seemingly showing a spirit of defiance to his master, but boldly proclaiming that he, too, held some secrets in his keeping which not only freed him from bondage, but enabled him to do a little something else in the way of coercion.

Boggess put on a bold face, and affected not to understand Martin's words, and to care nothing for his threats, but nevertheless he was sorely troubled and full of uneasiness and alarm. His past was such that he would not have had it made public for all the gold in the Rocky Mountains. Martin's past was bad, but in comparison to his own it was a mere nothing.

How much Martin knew of his past Boggess did not know, but it was plain that he knew a great deal too much. His words and manner implied that he knew it all, but Boggess would not allow himself to believe that. He admitted, however, that Martin knew enough to make things unpleasant, and that there was no fair to be a reversal of the relations of the two men. Martin had already shown that much by his conduct.

Without another word Boggess turned on his heel and walked away into the bushes. Martin watched him until he was out of sight, then he went over to where Johnson was lying and threw himself down on the ground.

"What have you fellows been talking about?" Johnson asked.

"I am afraid I have gone and made a fool of myself and said too much for our good," Martin answered.

Johnson sat up at once.

"You didn't go and tell him anything?" he questioned anxiously.

"Not about you. No. But I said more than I should."

"What did you say?"

"Not much; but I have him to understand that I was not a fool, at least."

Johnson shook his head and a troubled look came to his face.

"I cautioned you to keep quiet," he said, "and you ought to have done so. No doubt you have set Boggess to thinking. He must put him on his guard, making my work all the harder for me. The probabilities are you have done even worse than that."

"I guess I have not done any more than alarm him, and don't see what else I could have done."

"Don't you?"

"No."

"Humph! You must be rather slow of perception."

"I guess I am. Anyhow, I fail to see what you are driving at."

"And yet you have known that man for two years."

"Yes, I have; but what has that got to do with anything?"

"I should know what it would mean to him if his past life was made public?"

"I should know a fact that I found at the end of a rope, I guess."

"Yes, I guess so. And he knows it, too, as well as you and I do."

"I reckon he does."

"And knowing that and knowing also that you held his secrets, can't you imagine what he was contemplated to do as a matter of self-protection?"

"Do you mean—"

"I mean that after what you have said to him you had better look a little out and let him get no further chance at you."

"Why, you don't think he'd resort to anything like murder, do you?"

Martin sat up, his eyes wide with alarm and his face white and ghastly. Johnson looked at him and smiled grimly, and he spoke there was nothing very comforting in the smile or his words.

"I don't imagine," he said, "that to a man like Boggess the slitting out of a human life is a very serious matter, nor one over which he would hesitate very long if his own safety depended on it. The murder was to some extent repugnant to him. I rather think that to him even the prospect of a gallows would be a great deal more so—so much so that I think he would rather not lose long in making a choice between the two."

"Then you think my life may be in danger?" Martin asked.

"Not only may be, but is."

"What, then, would you advise me to do?"

"Nothing that you can do is to keep your mouth shut, play the part of a friend to Boggess and be constantly on your guard."

"And you really believe he would do that?"

"I see no reason to doubt it."

Martin grounded Johnson's surmises were was proven that very night.

CHAPTER XII.

The days were slipping by and still Joe and Jim remained in camp. It was not a matter of choice with them, either, for they were impatient to get back to their claim and begin the work of developing. The only reason they had not gone was because they had not been able to get money.

Joe had tried in every imaginable quarter to secure the necessary funds, but all his efforts had been useless. At several times he had thought he had made suitable arrangements, but at the last moment something had transpired to frustrate him. Then the men were ready to advance him all the money he needed, they demanded an interest in the claim, and he was never willing that he should never give that.

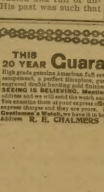
"The claim is ours," he said to Jim, "and we have worked for it and earned it, and we are going to have the good of it."

"I hope so, Jim replied, "but it begins to look a little doubtful whether we will ever get to put in there."

"It is a little discouraging," Joe admitted, "but we'll make it all right in time. We'll get the money some way."

"Well, I hope we will. We're wasting lots of valuable time here when we can't very well afford to lose a day."

"That's so, Jim, but it can't be helped. I am doing all in my power to hurry things



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along. I am sorry that I have been the cause of this delay."

Jim looked up quickly, then he placed his hand on his companion's shoulder.

"Now look here, Joe," he said, "don't you go to thinking that I am complaining or finding fault with you. You ought to know that I am not an ungrateful cuss, and that is just what I would be if I raised a row or begun to whine about anything you did. I don't forget that if it hadn't been for you I wouldn't have any claim nor anything else, and the chances are I'd be one that I wouldn't even be alive. I don't forget all I owe you, Joe, and how good and kind—"

Joe turned away with an assumption of fierceness and disgust.

"Oh, shut up," he cried. "You make me weary. I'm no angel or Santa Claus, and I'm not looking for any bouquets. Be a man, and if you are going to talk at all talk like a man. We don't outgrown our childhood days."

"That's all right," Jim replied. "You may be are not an angel nor a Santa Claus, and maybe we ain't children, but just the same I know what you did for me in the time I was laid up with a busted leg, and dead broke, and I says the one to forget it in a hurry neither. Whether you like for me to say it or not, you are the best friend I ever had, and you did for me what no other person on earth, except my own mother, would have done. And there's my interest and I got a right to them, and it's nobody's business."

Joe's face flushed and he looked ashamed and embarrassed.

"I reckon," he said presently, "that if a man feels called on to make a great to-do about nothing there ain't no law against it. However, I'll do it for that sort of a human being I'd been if I hadn't done what little I could for you. And it was bad enough, I'm sure. It wasn't any more than anybody ought to have done."

"Maybe not, but it was a good deal more than anybody else did do. And I was a stranger to you, too, which I wasn't to a good many other people."

"Oh, you it's all right, so let it go. There is no use of everlastingly kicking up a fuss about a fool thing that's done past and over with."

"Saving my life may seem like a fool thing to you, Joe, but it ain't anything of that kind to me. I can tell you."

Joe shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Presently he looked around and said:

"If you don't let up on all this silly twaddle, Jim, I don't know but I'll get to thinking that it were a kind of foolish thing to save your life sure enough. If we are going to talk at all let's talk about it. We are not to figure out something about that claim."

"That's what I'd like to do," Jim answered, and then he and Joe were on, and seems to me we've figured up two or three arithmetics, and still we've not figured out a blessed thing. I confess that I am at the end of my rope."

"I'm puzzled, myself, but something has got to be done, and done pretty soon. Somebody is to come along at any time and jump the claim, and in that case we would have a hard time regaining possession of it."

"That's so. But we've kept the matter so quiet that nobody knows about the find or at least nobody has any idea where it is located."

"No; but at the same time some one might stumble on to it. There is another thing. We have written to those women to come on out here, and the first thing we know they'll be here and the deed broke and no more fixed to care for them than a couple of corpses. Something has to be done, and done pretty quick, and, whether we can or not, we've got to do it."

Jim was silent and thoughtful for some time, then he said hesitatingly:

"I don't know, Joe, but I thought maybe if you went to Doctor Jenson, and laid the matter before him in the true light, and made it plain to him how necessary it is to have money just now and is depending on it, and all that, that he might make a little special effort and get it for you."

Joe shook his head.

"No doubt Doctor Jenson would do that all right if he were asked, but I went to him with all that batch of statements, but I know it would put him to a serious inconvenience, and I am not going. I feel that after all he has done for me I have no right to ask him to inconvenience himself at all, and, when it comes right down to the right and merits of the matter, there's nothing more in him that it is mine. He earned it several times over, and if he was to keep it I would still be in debt to him. I need the money bad enough, but I can't go to the Doctor for it."

"I understand how you feel, Joe, and I do not blame you for the way you look at it. Of course, under the circumstances, you can not go to the Doctor. We will lose the claim rather than you should ask anything of him. And it begins to look as though we may lose it sure enough."

"It does look rather discouraging just now." Joe admitted. "But for all that we'll not lose the claim."

At that moment Boggess stood over the

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find, a broad grin of satisfaction on his face and a feeling of joy in his heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

Doctor Jenson was sitting at his desk with his head resting on his hands, and a sad, far away look in his eyes. Within a week he had aged perceptibly, and his face was haggard, and looked ill. His shoulders were stooped and his manner was that of one who has grown very weary. On his face there was a restless, uneasy expression like that of an animal that is being hunted.

He was thinking and his thoughts were far from pleasant ones. He was recalling the days and years of the long past—the time when he was a young man, full of hope and with a radiant-hued future, and when he looked forward to a great career resplendent with brilliant achievements. There was everything before him then—everything that a proud, honest, ambitious soul could desire, and his longings reached away to the top of the mountainous road to fame. He knew that it was in him to soar high and he had groomed his wings for the flight.

Then there came a time—the one evil moment which had brought a dark shadow over his whole life and cast a sooty pall forever shut out all the fond hopes of which he had so long dreamed. In that moment there had come to him the thing that had blighted his future, destroyed his happiness and driven forth forever his honor and an unknown wanderer on the face of the earth, compelled to live a life of deception and dear to him and not daring to own his own name.

He recalled how, through the long weary years that had followed, he had struggled and toiled, until—more through chance, but of use to mankind and to atone as far as possible for that one great wrong, he had won a hand and could, and he had succeeded, no one knew how much. Sometimes it had seemed that his punishment was too great, but he had never complained. Then there had come a time when life was sweet and perfect love, and it was like the sudden bursting of a summer sun through a cloud. Then—then—but he would not recall to him by the ties of marriage, but he and her secretly and was almost hand. Then there came a day when her marriage to Jenson was forced, and she was free, but still there stood between her and him that one shadow, and he realized in his sad days that it would always be there.

And now there had come that man who himself knew of his secret, and who had the secret of that one dark blotch, and something meant a return to his silence. If there had ever been any hope in the Doctor's heart of marriage and happiness in the coming years it was now gone forever. He could never bear to have money and hold up a bank hand to purchase his own safety at the price an unspeakable disgrace to her. Then, even if he could have afforded it, he loved her entirely too well to sell her name and her happiness with those things that were blackened by him.

Suddenly he sat up, for there was the tramp of many feet on the stairs, and, before he had hardly pulled himself together, the door of his private office was open and Judson Mann crowded in. His gave one look, and, realizing what it meant, sank with a heart sunk.

One of them stepped forward and shook hands with the Doctor. It was Judge Pendleton, a townsman and the father of Susan, and after he had done so the others, not so chanically the Doctor shook their hands and forgot their names almost as soon as he met them. Then the Judge took his hat off, and throwing his head back he said:

"Doctor Jenson, to my companions and myself has fallen the pleasing and happy duty of informing you that you have been by your protests the convention of our party and that this day done their part in making you its standard-bearer in this district in the race for that high and distinguished position, a seat in the Congress of the United States."

The Doctor had just got started on a long and well prepared speech, which he had written out a week before, and which he had thought would prove a great effort. He had paused to let his introductory remarks sink in, and was about to resume when the door opened again and a ragged, dirty little girl stole swiftly into the office. Nobody except the Doctor appeared to see her and at least no one else took any notice of her.

The Judge opened his lips to proceed with his speech, but his closed them again without saying a word. To his astonishment the Doctor had turned his back on the whole company, and was turning to speak to the child.

"Judge, and you other gentlemen, I hope you will pardon me if my conduct seems in any manner not in keeping with the occasion, but I think this is a call that I have no right to ignore even for a few minutes. If you will do me the honor to wait here until I return I shall take pleasure in hearing all you may have to say."

He started out, and the visitors all looked at him in dumb surprise. Just as he reached the door, however, the Judge recovered himself enough to say:

"Doctor Jenson, this is no child's play that we are engaged in, and we are not children, and we do not care to be treated as such."

The Doctor looked back and there was concern in his face.

"Judge," he said, "if do not wish you to think me rude, and you know I have the highest opinion possible of you. But if there is one in a dark and suffering my first duty is to that one. I trust you will view my conduct in the right light, but whatever construction you put on it I still must do my duty as I see it."

With that he was gone. The committee stood silent for a full minute, gazing intently at one another. Then one and another drew a long sigh, and shook their heads, and looked serious and thoughtful. Judge Pendleton sank down on a chair and mopped his bald head with his handkerchief, and then in accordance with color, though whether from mortification or anger no one knew.

There were several minutes of solemn silence before anybody spoke. This was followed by some one else laughing. Presently the laugh became contagious and, every one joining the Judge became serious. The latter sat grave and solemn in his wounded dignity.

"Gentlemen," the Judge" one of the committee finally asked. "Shall we wait for the Doctor or another office?"

"If we do," another said, "the Judge had better begin where he left off and go as far as he can before the Doctor comes again. In the course of time, and probably before election, he can give him an all of it in piecemeal that way."

"No else some of us had better hold the Doctor until the speech is finished," some one else suggested.

Gentlemen," a large pompous man spoke up, "to me this seems to be no laughable matter. We have come on a highly important mission to discharge a solemn and important duty. As Judge Pendleton a moment ago remarked, we are not children and our business here is not mere child's play. We have been waiting a long time politely and we should behave ourselves like gentlemen."

Then what do you suggest that we should do?" somebody asked.

"I suggest that we may not meet with the approbation of the committee, but it is my humble opinion that we leave. I think we should return to the convention hall, report how matters stand, and ask that another man be placed in nomination in Doctor Jenson's stead."

"That's a good idea," another agreed, "and I move we act on it."

Judge Pendleton arose and looked around him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "so far as Jenson is concerned I wish we could do that but the welfare of the party will not permit it. Jenson is the best man in the district we can elect and we must have him. I—"

The door opened and the Doctor came in.

Next week's Ledger will contain another installment of this highly interesting story. We advise you to subscribe to the end. Do you take the Ledger regularly? You ought to do so, as the paper is devoted to be one of the most entertaining papers printed in the country. The subscription we send is 52 copies of the Ledger and six fine pattern books for one of King Cameras. Note our premium advertisements on pages thirteen and fifteen.

UNRECOGNIZED.

The Christmas gift was large and bright, And young Alonzo's heart was tight; He, so to speak, was broke to the core Until the postman came, and then

The day took on a sudden gloom, Alonzo raged from room to room, And gnawed, wild eyed and sore distraught The gift that Santa Claus had brought.

'Twas not that she had scrimped the price, Nor failed to send him something nice—The gift was useful, that was the cause In that he knew not what it was.

Pointed Paragraphs.

Loan sharks infest the sea of finance.

True love doesn't thrive well in a public park.

Nearly all husbands and wives are in the matrimony class.

Uncle Sam's largest burying ground is the dead-letter office.

There is often a black eye in a name—if it is applied to a woman.

Out of sight isn't necessarily out of mind when applied to a pretty girl.

What the average lawyer is always a cause of pride to the trickster.

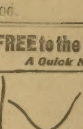
Christmas in Sweden.

If you were in Sweden on Christmas eve you would hear the church bells begin to ring at 5 o'clock. Then every body stops work and the festivities begin in great earnest everywhere in the kingdom. Class distinctions are forgotten and servants are allowed to be merry with the family. After supper comes the universal Christmas tree, for Sweden is one of the early homes of the Christmas tree.

On Christmas morning at 8 o'clock, while it is still dark, all repair to church, for everybody goes, unless you stayed at home to mind the lights in the house, for every home in the kingdom is illuminated. There is almost sure to be a deep snow, and you would go to church in a sleigh. Behind every sleigh you would see two boys standing on the runners and holding pine torches —a beautiful spectacle as a long procession of sleighs glides over the snow on a forest road. These torches are stuck up in a circle around the church. A whole week is given to good cheer and hospitality.

FREE to the RUPTURED

A Quick New Cure



I have made new and important discoveries in the cure of Rupture and for the next 30 days I will give every Ruptured person who follows these directions a chance to try this remarkable Home Cure, FREE.

Mark on the diagram the location of the rupture. Answer the questions and mail this to DR. W. S. RICE, 2711 Rice Street, Adams, N. Y.

Age..... Time Ruptured.....

Name.....

Address.....

Town.....

Town ruptured.....Do you wear a Truss?.....

10 COLORED POSTALS, Frosted, Love Scenes, Tickey's and Indio Series, 10c. Rose Art Co., West Haven, Conn.

LADIES wanted to make Sanitary Belts, $12 per week. Steady employment. Send stamp for particulars. Sanitary Co., Dept. 4 C, Chicago.

PATENTS 47p. book free. Highest refs. Best results. Promptness assured. WATSON E. COLEMAN, Patent Lawyer, Washington, D.C.

LADIES to work on Pincushions $3.00 per doz. All materials furnished. Send stamp for particulars. Universal Mfg. Co., Champlain Bldg., Chicago

PILES Painless, Harmless, Permanent cure. Trial package sent free. Address J. E. REMEDY, Box 69, New York, N.Y.

SONG Your Poems May Be Worth Money. We Write Music, Revise, Publish and Copyright on Royalty. We Will Guarantee Satisfaction. Send Poems. Metropolitan Music Co., 1505 Masonic Temple, Chicago

GOLD TEETH Dr. Hall's Method. Your own teeth filled with Gold. Crowns and Bridges without plates. Teeth without plates. Gold fillings. Painless extraction. Teeth in a day. Dr. HALL, 24 State St., Chicago. Reference, any bank in Chicago.

FORTUNE TOLD FREE

The Scientific method of reading Hand, Face, Head, Stars, Numbers & Cards and put your fortune down on slip of paper. Send 10c. and date of birth. PROF. ALVA L. DEAN, Box 1, Station A, Chicago, Ill.

LEARN VETERINARY DENTISTRY in 6 months. Graduates earning $2000 to $5000 yearly. Write for free catalogue. Only months of your spare time by illustrated lessons and personal instruction. Veterinary Dental College, Detroit, Mich.

MORPHINE FREE TRIAL TREATMENT

Opium and all drug habits. Painless, Permanent Home Cure. Nervous and debilitated restored to health and vigor. Book free. Write to-day. Confidential advice free. DR. J. C. HOFFMAN, Sec. ST. PAUL ASSOCIATION, Suite 1205-6-8 Van Buren St., Chicago.

$3.60 A $50 Watch for $3.60

Solid Gold Cases. FREE. GUARANTEED FOR 20 YEARS. Equal to a Genuine Gold Filled Engraved Watch. Handsome Engraved Solid Gold Case, with Ladies' or Gents' Size, Stem Wind and Set, high grade fully jeweled movement. Sent C. O. D. for $3.60 and express charges. Send for FREE WATCH CHAIN AND CHARM CATALOGUE. Write to-day. Address, CHICAGO WATCH CO., Dept. 16, Chicago. Reference, any bank in Chicago. Send $3.60 and express charges and it is yours. Write to-day. Address, CHICAGO WATCH CO., Dept. 16, Chicago. GUARANTEE: WATCH CO., Dept. 16A, Chicago

LIFE IN THE WOODS

This is a very useful book, being a complete guide to the woods. It tells how to build a log cabin, how to fish, gives right secrets of success in the art, how to cook game, how to build camp fires, how to make a bed of boughs, how to make a shelter in the woods, how to make a raft, how to make a canoe, how to make a boat, how to make a sail, how to make a paddle, how to make a spear, how to make a bow and arrow, how to make a sling shot, how to make a boomerang, how to make a fish net, how to make a fish trap, how to make a fish hook, how to make a fish line, how to make a fish spear

Once Enough.

Conductor (after a collision in which everybody was bounced half-way across the car, but no one was hurt)—Gentlemen, I find that no great harm has been done. We can run into the rear end of a freight-train; and if some of you will come out and help clear the track, we can proceed on our journey.

Fat Passenger—Conductor, are there any more freight-trains on ahead?

Conductor—Oh, I suppose so.

Fat Passenger—Well, let's stay where we are.

Right Brand of Reform.

Dibbles—There goes Rhymer and his rich wife. She married him nearly a year ago to reform him.

Scribbles—Did she succeed?

Dibbles—Sure. He hasn't written a poem since they faced the parson together.

Early History.

Wakeful Willie—Mammal

Tired Mamma—Well, dear?

Wakeful Willie—When Santa Claus was a little boy, who filled his stocking?

Lively Limericks.

There was a particular bride
Who objected to eggs being fried;
Not because of the grease,
But the touching decease
Of the poor little birdies, inside.

There was a young fellow named Lees,
Who never could learn to spell cheese;
He tried it with "c's"
In forty-nine ways,
Till he found he could do it with "e's."

There once was a dashing artiste
Who ate forty-four cakes of yeast;
She swelled up to great size,
And arose to the skies,
And is now drifting south by southeast.

There was an old lady in Rocking
Who considered profanity shocking;
"It is awful to swear!"
She would often declare,
"But I really must darn this old stocking!"
—Ridgway's.

Paw's Christmas Box.

"Just what I wanted!"

Tattered Tommy—Say, Maggie, two ter one der goes old Santa just starting out on his trip and wearin' a disguise till he gets out of town.

On the Home Track.

"Joe is a great walker."

"Indeed. How long has he been walking?"

"Lemme see. I believe the twins are five months old."

A CHRISTMAS WAIL.

I promised to send the mistletoe
To be hung on the chandelier,
Attached by a ribbon of baby blue,
Decried by a ma austere.

'Twas to shine in the light with berries red,
And then when the coast is clear,
I bargained that her dear lips and mine
Would touch 'neath the chandelier.

But, ah! I must take the bitter pill
And silently sit and munch;
There'll be no kissing—for mistletoe
Costs "one and a half" a bunch.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Caller (at widow's flat)—Is your mother engaged, Johnny?

Small Johnny—No, ma'am; but she's got her eye on an old bachelor."

Aunt Mary—And does the baby still look like me?

Little Fred—No. Papa says she's gradually getting good looking.

"What are you playing with, Elsie?" asked her mother.

"With a caterpillar and two small kitten-pillars," answered the miss.

An Inch or So Below.

"It's funny," began the long-winded bore, "but nobody ever seems glad to see me."

"Well, and have you never found out the cause of your unpopularity?"

"No, I can't discover it."

"That's strange, because it's right under your very nose."

Why She Left.

Mistress—But, bless me, why are you leaving us, Mary? I'm sure I do all the work.

The General Servant—Yes, ma'am, but I don't like the way you do it.

Knew What He Was Doing.

"Mr. Greengrocer, you told me you could guarantee these eggs."

"So I did, ma'am. You wanted them cheap, and I sold them to you with the guarantee that always goes with 12 cent eggs."

"What is that, pray?"

"That you'd bring them back."

"Just at the age
'Twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech,
And speech is truth."

Brain Food.

Replying to a "Young Author," Mark Twain once wrote: "Yes; Agassiz does recommend authors to eat fish, because the phosphorus in it makes brains. So far you are correct. But I cannot help you to a decision about the amount you need to eat—at least, not with certainty. If the specimen composition you sent is about your fair usual average, I should judge that a couple of whales would be all you would want for the present. Not the largest kind, but simply good, middling-sized whales."

No Longer Interesting.

Edyth—Did Stella break her engagement with young Hughes because her father opposed him?

Mayme—No; because her father stopped opposing him.

The Scale of Prices.

Fresh Traveling Man—How much for your regular dinner, honey?

Pretty Waiter Girl—Fifty cents without honey, 75 with.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

$100 A MONTH AND TRAVELING EXPENSES paid men to place Peerless KEROSENE HEATERS. A. Burel Co., Parsons, Kansas

CASH SALARY and all expenses to introduce our Rain Coats and Raincoats. Send for samples. 20 cents each. Standard Mfg. Co., Dept. 67, Cincinnati, O.

AGENTS MAKE 300 PER CENT PROFIT selling our Dressmakers' Favorites; one who work for small space will fill 6 to 10 orders with this opportunity? A dozen other good sellers and 100 per cent profit. AMERICAN MACHINE CO., Johnstown, Ohio, Box 83

AGENTS Wanted for our Forged Steel Combination Hatchet, Wire Cutter, Staple Puller, etc., 8 tools in one. Handiest article out. You sell every farmer. Sells at sight. Big profits. Write for circular. Agents sold as high as fifty a day. Get a sample. Pay back for small outfit. Don't delay. You can make big money. Manufacturers Forged Steel Sewing Machine and Knives combined. For repairing harness, mending fences, building, etc. Get 1 for Line Fitting Tools. Write today for catalog of samples, special prices, plans to sell. A. E. Poole Foundry Co., Dept. 666, Fredericktown, Ohio.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

JOLLITY

Mrs. Leader's Liberality.

Struggling Pastor—Nearly all the congregation has subscribed liberally for the Christmas tree fund, and I feel sure that I can also have your hearty co-operation. How much will you—

Mrs. Leader—Let me see. Oh, I am the only member who has a carriage and coachman, I think.

Struggling Pastor—Yes. The rest are poor.

Mrs. Leader—Well, I will drive around and collect the subscriptions.

A Long Wait.

Mr. Haysseed (after a long, weary wait in a New York restaurant)—Seems to me that br'iled Philadelphia spring chicken we ordered is a long while coming.

Mrs. Haysseed (resignedly)—I s'pose the train is off the track.

Not to Disappoint Her.

Junior Partner (of Grouch & Skimp)—I'm afraid our typewriter, Miss Jinks, expects something handsome at Christmas.

Senior Partner—All right; let's give her our photographs.

Getting Around a Difficulty.

An instructor in a certain boys' school is noted among his pupils for his difficult examination questions. One of the youthful students, after struggling over a particularly strenuous list of questions in geography, came upon the following query, which completely stumped him:

"Name twelve animals of the polar regions."

The youngster scratched his head, thought hard for many minutes, and, finally, under the stress of a sudden inspiration, wrote:

"Six seals and six polar bears."

The professor was so pleased with his pupil's cleverness that he marked his paper 100 per cent.

Seeking a Reason.

"Last night," said Bloomington Barns, "we played to standing room only."

"What was the matter?" queried his friend, Walker Tighs. "Wouldn't anybody buy seats?"

No Excuse.

Bluffer Bill—Say, Pete, be ye goin' ter hang up yer stockin' tonight?

Piper Pete—Naw; tain't wet.

'Strong in Death.

"So Skorcher is dead?"

"Yes. He collided with another automobile yesterday and——"

"Was instantly killed, eh?"

"Not instantly. He lived long enough to offer to bet that the other fellow's machine was damaged worse than his."

For Flat Dwellers.

"One-half the world doesn't know how the other half lives," quoted his wife.

"No," rejoined her husband, "but it keeps about nine-tenths of that half busy trying to find out."

How It Can Be Done.

"It is said that no man in these days can make a living out of poetry."

"I know one how does. He runs a printing office and publishes books of poetry at the expense of the poets."

Always Ready.

"Miss Pust has a queer habit of nodding her head and interjecting 'yes, yes,' when any one talks to her. Funny, isn't it?"

"Yes, I think she got that habit waiting for some man to propose."

Mrs. Uptowne—Well, Delia, did they have some nice Christmas anthems in church this morning?

Delia—Yis, ma'am, there was lots of Chrisanthemums, not counting the holly and mistletoe and other kinds of flowers.

"Man Wants but Little"—

"Made known your wants for Christmas yet?"

"Sure. Asked forty-seven friends who sent me suspenders last year to send trousers to match them this."

The Dawn of Christmas.

Christmas Day begins in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and there is where Santa Claus starts and ends his great and long journey of the year.

Cause and Effect.

Enamored Youth—Your father seems worried about something tonight.

Sweet Girl—Yes, poor pa has so many business cares.

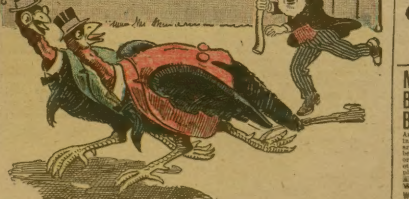
Little Brother—That isn't it. He's mad because the big dog he bought didn't come.

Limited.

"Does you feel thankful dis Chris'mus?"

"Dess middlin'. Providence gimme a good appetite, but he stopped right dar!"

CHRISTMAS EVE.



First Turkey—The old man appears to be after us.

Second Turkey—Yes; perhaps it is time we were getting dressed for dinner.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of The Ledger will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

AGENTS WANTED For Mend-a-Rip

Greatly improved. Better than ever. Sews all kinds of light and heavy materials. Fine cloth, silk, leather, canvas, carpet, oil cloth, rubber goods, etc. Sews in seam same as machine

A HUSBAND'S SIN;

Or, THE LURE OF LOVE.

By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 46, Nov. 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVII.
THE VOICE OF WARNING.

"Are you all alone, dear?"

"Yes, Mrs. Guilder, I am delighted to see you," Love said in her pretty little way, rising and coming forward to meet her guest.

"You will forgive my early call?"

"Perhaps if I do, I can induce you to remain to lunch with me." Love suggested, and none to hear her prettily fall into the light chat of the circle into which she had been forced, would have believed that she was not yet seventeen, and until her marriage had been but a happy child, playing at life in the old garden.

Mrs. Guilder looked at her, and remembering Love the bride, felt her heart ache. Happy beyond all hope, how she wanted to atone for her former coldness and try and save this child further suffering.

"My dear Mrs. Clayton," she began, "I wish you would not treat me as a stranger, but admit me to your heart."

Love felt a strange something in her heart, almost resentment against this woman, whom she had once overheard talking about her. Admit her to that poor, worn, anguished heart, never!

"I see you hesitate, and I do not wonder, but may I tell you something? None of my friends know it yet."

"I will be glad to hear it," Love said gently, her frozen courtesy rising to the surface, "and to sympathize with your happiness."

Mrs. Guilder saw through the gentle sweetness, and wanted with all her heart to break the ice. Suddenly she bowed forward and said, her lips trembling:

"Little Love, once long ago I had a sister named that, and she is dead. If she were living I would go to her today and tell her that I have at last won my heart's happiness, that the man I love, loves me, and that we are to be married very soon. I cannot go to her, but I want to make you my confidante."

She could scarcely have taken a better road to Love's heart, for a pair of little hands were outstretched, and a soft face pressed against her own, while Love's voice said softly:

"Indeed I do, and I will play at being that sister if I may," and then the two cried to their heart's content, and Love felt some of the terrifying, stupifying sorrow was washed away.

Mrs. Guilder did not confide very much after all, for her love was too sacred for that, but she did let the young wife see into her heart far enough to realize that she was very happy, and that she thoroughly understood the man she was going to marry.

"Just as I do Kerle," she thought, and then blamed herself.

"I tried to be a good wife to Mr. Guilder," Hilda said earnestly, "but, my dear, a wife ought not to have to try. It ought to come naturally."

"It ought, but does it always?" Love asked.

"Now well she tries to hide her misery," the visitor thought.

"No, dear, it does not, and I believe when things come to the pass that a wife has to keep up such an effort, it is wrong for her to remain with the man."

Love looked at her with wide-open eyes.

"You mean?" she asked.

"Divorce. If I had been true to myself, I would have separated myself from Mr. Guilder, although, poor man, he was so good and true, and I made him happy, so perhaps it was better as my case is."

Love sat up in her chair and looked her guest in the face.

"Mrs. Guilder, you are talking about something which means sunlight to my point, won't you?" What are you hinting at?"

Hilda Guilder paused a moment. She might be mistaken, but no, the pale face, with dark-ringed eyes, the listless air, combined with what she knew of Stephen, and the absolute hush in everybody's mouth, convinced her this wife was eating out her heart.

"I will bind no longer, but will speak to the point. My child, do not ruin your life. If Stephen Clayton cannot make you happy, leave him, return to your father and be freed."

Love rose to her feet, there was a grave dignity in her manner, which set well upon her, as she replied:

"My dear madame, you must forgive me, but you are grossly insulting both Mr. Clayton and me."

"Listen, child, listen. I know him. I know how cruel he can be, and I warn you."

"Madame, I refuse to discuss my husband with you or any one else," was the dignified reply.

"Don't discuss him, but listen to reason. I tell you he is false to you, and that the time will come when you will be in a position where you will only be held up to scorn."

Love's face was like a carven marble, as she re-seated herself and took up a book. To all outward seeming she was oblivious to the fact that she had a caller. She did not want to send Mrs. Guilder from the room, and so she adopted the next best course.

Tears rolled down Hilda Guilder's face as she said softly:

"I know I have hurt you terribly, but I have had to do it. Sometime you will see, too late I fear, that I was right. Until then, I hope you will think of me just as one who wished to make you happy," and a sob stopped her sentence.

Love threw away her book, and threw her arms about the other's neck, and then they kissed each other very tenderly. Then Hilda said a word more, but after Hilda, with her veil pulled down, left the room, the wife sat gazing into the future, with eyes blinded with hopeless tears.

CHAPTER XVIII.
THE VOICE OF DUTY.

"Only a word, Stephen."

"All right."

Love led the way into the same room in which she had listened to her husband's cruel words not many days previous, but before, but now she was utterly changed. She was no longer a gentle, loving child, but a woman, determined to make one more stand for her happiness. She knew she had a difficult task before her, for it was not only necessary to re-awaken her husband's love, but also her esteem. She dreaded to attempt it, but she felt it was her duty, and duty was all that seemed left to her.

Mind hurrying for her husband's words broke in upon her meditations, and she started guiltily.

"Not in the least, because I am anxious to clear away the shadow which has come between us."

"Then you recognize it, too?"

"I cannot help recognizing it, when it is so thick I can see nothing through it," Stephen replied coldly.

"Hurry up," Stephen growled, snapping his watch case.

There is nothing more annoying to one struggling to overcome anxiety and natural difficulties than dull inaction, but Love continued.

"Stephen, I am your wife, and I have sworn to love, honor and obey you. I will always do that, but do not make it impossible for me to do the best for you."

"Enough of your whining," he said angrily, "I have important engagements."

"Your engagement must wait until I have finished. Love said with determination, that he looked at her in bewilderment.

"I remember, Stephen, that old garden, with Silvery Brook running through it, and with the flowers I love so well. I can inhale the perfume of the roses, see the delicate and gorgeous colorings, and mingling with it all, I can smell your cake, so different from what it is now, saying:

"I love you!"

"Don't play with me," he cried, trying to draw away from her soft fingers, which clung to his hand.

"I thought you the most wonderful man in all the world. You seemed to combine all the beauties of that garden, all the mystery of life, all the joys of existence, and Stephen, when you kissed me, fire, not blood, surged in my veins. Surely, surely, in less than a year, you cannot have forgotten."

"No, I have not forgotten," he said hoarsely. Some of that old fascination was coming over him.

"Remember, darling, you were my first love, I was and am to all the boy of that wonderful passion by your words, by your lips. Keep the love you created, Stephen, I implore you. You found a girl, a child, and you changed her into a woman in a single moment. You filled her empty heart with the knowledge of joy and misery, you taught her a women's fate, to hang upon a man's smile or frown, and with that responsibility on you, do not toss aside what is your own."

She was clinging to him now, her heart beating madly, she, the poor child, was frightened almost to death. Following Kerle's advice, she had applied this test, and hoped to whip into her own heart some of the love she felt ought to be there, but to her horror when she mentioned the old garden, it was Kerle she saw, not Stephen; when she recalled her flowers, it was with the memory of the hours she and Kerle had spent working among them. Instead of magnolias and roses, in spite of herself, she could recall the fragrance of tea, and mingling she grew for Kerle's experiments. In spite of this, however, she clung to her husband. He had created the love, even if he could not hold it, and she prayed with all her heart that he would return to her and she resolved to try as never a woman before, to heal the breach, and draw him into a less dissipated life. Her eyes had not been closed or her ears deaf to scandals, and she knew much more than any of her friends imagined.

The man looked down at her. He remembered how proud he had been to win her, and how proudly he had brought her home. What had disturbed them? He knew only too well, Dahlia Rathbone.

It was her little fleers which annoyed him with his wife, made him see vulgarity in every action, shall now it was too late. He had made his arrangements, all his possessed was turned into ready money, even the house and furniture of the house they were now in, and the meanness of it all was that Love had signed the various papers as he had asked her.

"My dear," Love's sweet voice went on, "Kerle gave me so you, He gave up his claims as I would be happy, and I am proud, carry out your agreement."

The word "Kerle" aroused him, and he cried, his face almost like a madman's:

I hope Santa Claus will bring something out of this STEVENS BOOK

The Stevens 140-page Catalogue is a Great Solver of the Christmas Gift Problem

It shows a big variety of the famous Stevens Arms—rifles for boys, girls and women, rifles and shotguns for men. It contains, also, much helpful information on hunting, proper care of weapons, notes on sights, ammunition, etc. Write for it to-day, sending 4c. in stamps to cover postage. Stevens Firearms train the nerves to steadiness, the eye to accuracy, and the muscles to alertness, beside furnishing an endless source of entertainment and healthful sport. Every Stevens is tested by an expert before leaving factory, and is guaranteed perfect.

Little Scout, No. 14, $2.25
Stevens-Hayward, Jr., $3
Crack Shot, . . . $4
Little Hog, . . . $5
Favorite No. 17, . . $6

Sent by us, express prepaid, if your dealer cannot supply you.

For six cents in stamps we will mail you our artistic ten-color lithograph. It is an attractive hunting scene worthy of a place on any wall.

J. STEVENS ARMS AND TOOL CO.
100 Pine Street
Chicopee Falls, Mass., U.S.A.

Waitress—Will you have your eggs broken or in the shell, sir?

Actor—Broken, please. I get them in the shell every night.

Discriminating.

Willie—Maw said de doctor brought him in de night.

Jimmy—Don't blame him! I'd hate ter carry such an ugly kid in der daytime myself.

Visitor—Won't you shake hands, my son?

Little Boy—Naw!

Visitor—Don't you like me?

Little Boy—Naw! Didn't I have ter have me face an' hands washed 'cause you come?

Him (just engaged)—Darling, I simply can't kiss you enough.

Her—Well, why waste any time talking about it?

"What dog's name brought up again."

"You, Stephen; think of him just as our best friend. He would do almost anything to make me happy."

"Then go to him," Stephen cried. "I'm good and tired of having that milksop thrown into my face all the while. If he had married you, instead of unloading you onto me, he might not think your happiness so important, just now. I like a real woman, not an unformed girl like you. To hold a man's love a woman must be his companion, his friend, his everything. I have found just these in Anna, and I tell you I intend to give her my love, not you. If you feel that I have wronged you, you can appeal to the courts, be freed, and then take your choice, the benevolent physician, or the heroic cripple," and he showed his teeth in an ugly grin.

Love was horrorized. Was it possible that the frank appearing young man she had married less than a year ago, could have deteriorated into such a brute as this? She shrank back, although one hand still automatically clung to his sleeve. With a foul curse the man, almost crazed by conflicting emotions, raised his fist and struck at the frail young figure. Not once, but seven times he hit her, the sound of his fist [illegible] her flesh never giving him pleasure before, and then he fairly fled, leaving her lying motionless upon the hearth of the home he had ruined.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VOICE OF RETRIBUTION.

Fleeing from his home, Stephen Clayton bathed his head in Deerlick branch, in it, was driven to the Twenty-sixth street ferry, and spent a miserable ten minutes gazing at the gloomy water.

Not for a moment did he think of going back, nor did he regret his course of action. So domineering had she also had been the influence of Dahlia Rathborn, that all that was wrong in his home was due to her action. For a while his wife had conquered, but of late he had discovered that the dark-fac woman was once more ruling him, for the past two weeks, while he was arranging his financial affairs his whole life seemed to hang upon her, although from the moment she had promised herself to him, he would not allowed to be alone. He did not know, however, that a stronger will than Dahlia's dwelt in him, nor that a pair of keen eyes watched him, for Gerrymander did not intend to escape a second beat.

Of all men in the world, he was best suited to control this wild creature, so strange a combination of good and evil.

The plan had been that Stephen take the Pennsylvania Flyer to Philadelphia, where he was to meet him at a certain hotel. Before leaving the train, according to agreement, he stopped long enough to pencil these lines:

Mrs. Clayton:

"I have left you forever. If you want to know where I have gone, send your private detective to — Hotel, Philadelphia, where you will find me with Dahlia Rathborn. She is my ideal of a true woman.

STEPHEN CLAYTON."

This he handed to a boy for instant delivery, but poor Love was spared the indignity of receiving it, for Gerrymander bought it from the boy, and pocketed it. He had no intention of having Dahlia's name so connected with his ever had.

What the man who had dishonored himself thought during his ride to Philadelphia, no one will ever know, for there was to happen that which closed his mouth forever. Still he could not have been happy. Reaching the city, he left the depot and hailed a cab, which took him to the hotel.

When he entered, he asked if Dahlia had arrived, and was surprised to receive a negative reply, for although the clerk told him that there was a letter awaiting him. Stephen cried:

"Come back to the depot."

Muttering to himself, he rushed out, took another cab, and back to the depot. Entering the ladies' waiting room, he came upon Dahlia, a resplendent figure in red and green, and she greeted him pleasantly.

Still, she was evidently astonished at the change in him. A large man, and one [illegible] looking for some months, h[illegible] scarlet, and his anger [illegible] for a time startled even [illegible]

"What is the [illegible]

"I want to know [illegible]

demand it!

"Why [illegible]

[illegible]

You [illegible] stead of at the hotel?"

Stephen looked closely at that strangely beautiful face, and then he felt he would pound her into insensibility.

"Explain that letter!" he cried.

"What?" bending her head a little to look at him, for he had received a flat blow.

"I cannot," was her calm reply.

"You wrote this."

"Never saw it," which was entirely true.

"You were to meet me at that hotel, but when I got there I left, intending me to come back to the depot. May I ask what it means?"

Dahlia smiled coldly, then raising her voice, she said:

"Gerry, please come here and talk to Mr. Clayton, I cannot understand him," and so

In his eyes Stephen saw his headsman standing by Dahlia's side and knew that he was doomed.

"Horse, allow me, Mrs. Gerrymander, our friend Clayton is ill," and he laid his hand upon Dahlia's arm.

"Gerrymander!"

"We certainly are," was the quick answer.

"When?"

"This morning, in the Little Church around the Corner."

"Father," Gerrymander sneered, although he knew that the old man had come to his being him who was sold. He had gone to Philadelphia, remained her until she guided by his stronger will, had gone with him. He had sent the note to the hotel, having forgotten her address, but he had been glad to fleer at Stephen, and promised himself some rare sport when he should be free. [illegible] Gerrymander, but there she missed her guess, for they returned several months later, as Mrs. Phayeton Gerrymander, people were astonished to see them together, but never had the slightest occasion to remark upon her peculiarities. Dahlia was a changed woman, and she was kind enough, but there was no doubt but that the strength of the Indian Princess was from his wife, save her dark skin.

Gerrymander looked at Stephen, and was a little alarmed. The man appeared very sick. He did not want his wife to be at all mixed up with this affair, so he said very coldly:

"Better go back to your wife now, Steve, and stop gallivanting with other women. Thank the Lord, He gave you as good a wife as Love on, Dahlia, I'll see this man to train," and he led her out of the depot and called a cab.

"Quick, bundle up those sables and ermine and put on this," he said drawing from one of his valises a heavy fur cloak. His brilliant plumage he covered with a veil, and during the ride to the depot he had time to noticed. He would have seen an entirely different appearance. They changed cabs once more, before they located at a small hotel, but the next day they took a train for Chicago. Their journey was to Canada had been shipped. Gerrymander had never heard from Stephen, and he waited for five minutes after they had left him, Stephen fell to the ground in a swoon, and he could not reach him he was dead from heart failure, so the physicians said. Gerrymander always said his death resulted from rage at being defeated.

CHAPTER XX.

THE VOICE OF PEACE.

Once more the moonlight falls over the old garden, and the perfume of the tuberose floated from the air. Its beams light up the golden hair of a very lovely young girl, who, although she was young, had known the sorrows of an unhappy married life and the relief of a widowhood of eight months.

When Love found herself widowed, she threw down her fan in disgust, not being willing that Kerle see her face, and the tenderhearted old man was sorry, but could not conceal all the misery, although he was infinitely touched at the way she clung to him, and he was glad to give all his endurance giving way. Mrs. Grayson came forward and announced that she had taken Love with her, abroad. This lady was without any immediate family, and had already become very fond of the sad little wife. This solved matters satisfactorily, and for eighteen months they traveled about. Love wore no mourning, she would not, but she bore all the queen dignity to remain away felt it due her own dignity of herself to until she was sure enough of herself to meet Kerle with an outward calmness.

She had hurt him by it, for like many of us, she overdid her part, and he had left her alone with her father, but now in the early moonlight she advanced into the garden, looking about.

"Kerle," she called at last, and in instant reply he came over the hedge, closely followed by another form, toward which Love fairly [illegible]

"Mr. Weymouth," she cried, delightedly, for Kerle had made good his promise. He had done more. Not only had he cured the boy's body, but he turned his thoughts in another direction, and while he will never forget his first love, Vanna, he is more than happy to meet Love simply as the prospective wife of his dearest friend.

"Isn't it wonderful?" she cried, looking from one to the other, her violet eyes sparkling.

"Change it to he, Mrs. Clayton," he replied, "and you'll come nearer to it.

Love flushed beautifully, and with the innocent which his own love had develop[illegible] Vanion excused himself and returned to his father, now visiting Kerle, but with whom he was by no means alone, leaving the two lovers.

For lovers they were. Neither could make any pretense about it.

held out his arms and Love [illegible]

"So you are really [illegible]

asked, holding back a [illegible] and wondering if there [illegible] a woman so fair.

"Yes, Kerle.

[illegible] know what it means to me, [illegible] he asked, his eyes searching her [illegible] though as my wife, Love?"

I think I do, my Kerle, be [illegible] ize what it is to me."

"And what is it to you, Love?" [illegible] gently, as he drew her to an [illegible] under an immense cypress [illegible] had sat thousands of times when she was but a little girl and curled her small [illegible] ries to him.

"What I tell you?" she asked in a low tone.

"I wish you would," gently.

"It means absolute happiness," gently, "also to me, dear."

"I mean your love on both sides."

"You know my own mind, my sweet." "It means a complete change in my life, filled to the utmost with beautiful thoughts and deeds."

"My precious little soul," very tenderly.

"And it means, after all this awful storm and sorrow, a calm, a restful, absolute and perfect peace," and her lips quivered.

"I had almost forgotten myself, Love, I could not have expressed my own thoughts more fully, especially as to peace."

"Then there has been storm and stress of weather for you, too?" Love asked gently.

"You know it, do you not?"

"And it has all come through my wicked nerves. I have been true to you in the first place," she said sadly, but drawing her to his breast, he said, and his voice deepened as he did so:

"Love darling, I believe we need not repress our feelings. Temptations have come to us, but we have fought against them the best we could, even in spite of all the pain. I am not sorry, for without our dead and gone troubles there would not be the bliss that is now ours. Love, I think that has been and reverently kissed her mouth, sealing her to himself.

(The end.)

King Edward's Christmas.

Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales and other members of the royal family, in their various homes, for years had served a royal Christmas feast, including pie and cake made by the following recipes, and no doubt the present king is keeping up the custom:

CHRISTMAS PUDDING—Wash and dry three pounds of currants, rub and cut in halves three pounds of raisins; chop one fourth pound of almonds and chop one and one-half pounds of beef; slice one pound of mixed candied peel, and prepare one and one-half pounds of bread crumbs.

Now mix all these ingredients thoroughly with one pound of flour, eight eggs (well beaten) and two wineglassfuls of brandy; grate in one nutmeg; add one teaspoonful of salt, life and three-quarters pounds of suet, a buttered mold; tie down tightly with a floured cloth, and boil six hours. The pudding may be rolled in a floured cloth and then mold.

When taken from the water hang the pudding up where every bit of moisture can drain off.

MINCE MEAT—Grate the rind from three lemons, squeeze the juice, boil the peel in just until tender, chop fine and mix all together. Peel, core and chop apples, remove the skins and cores, and add the pulp to the lemon. Add to this mixture one pound of chopped suet, one pound of sugar, one pound chopped suet, two pounds sugar, one pound of currants, one pound of raisins, each of lemon and orange peel, one teacupful of brandy, two tablespoonfuls orange marmalade, one teaspoonful each of cinnamon, chopped fine. Mix thoroughly. Pack in stone jars, cover closely and in two weeks the meat will be ready for use.

MINCE PIES—Add one tablespoonfuls of baking powder with one and one-half pounds of flour; to this add one-half pound of candied peel, chopped; five pounds of currants, two pounds of cut raisins, one-fourth pound of almonds chopped fine; one dessertspoonful of mace and one-half teaspoonful of salt.

In another dish rub one and one-half pounds of butter and an equal weight of sugar to a cream; add twelve eggs, slightly beaten, and one and one-half tumblers of wine and brandy mixed.

Into this second mixture stir the mixture of dry ingredients, dropping it in a handful at a time and mixing constantly with the other hand; add enough sour milk to make it flow. Sometimes to get a drink of water, and of into a conversation with an old negro, in the course of which he became somewhat confidential. "My wife," said he, "is powerful strong-art. She's always askin' me for [illegible] she wants it [illegible] and a [illegible] that, and there's no end of it."

"Well, does she do with them?"

"She don't do anything with it."

"Don't that?" I asked in surprise.

"Why, I don't give it to her," replied he in the most matter of fact way.

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JUST SEND YOUR NAME

EXTRA

WASHINGTON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

When answering advertisements you will oblige the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

His Wife's Extravagance.

"Some people," remarked the man who alks in the country when he has a chance, "are peculiar bleas of extravagance. While out in the country the other day I stopped to refresh myself at a drink of water, and ot into a conversation with an old negro, in the course of which he became somewhat confidential. 'My wife,' said he, 'is powerful strong-art. She's always askin' me for [illegible] she wants it [illegible] and a [illegible] that, and there's no end of it.'

'What does she do with them?'

'She don't do anything with it.'

'Don't that?' I asked in surprise.

"'Why, I don't give it to her,' replied he in the most matter of fact way.

A FRIEND'S ADVICE

Something Worth Listening To.

A young Nebraska man was advised by a friend to eat Grape-Nuts because he was all run down from a spell of fever. He tells the story:

"Last spring I had an attack of fever that left me in a very weak condition. I had to quit work but the doctor's medicine was nervous and discouraged.

"A friend advised me to eat Grape-Nuts, but I had paid no attention to him and kept getting worse as time went by.

"I took many kinds of medicine but none of them seemed to help me. My system was completely run down and could get out of order from want of proper food, and several very large boils broke out on my neck. I was so weak I could hardly walk.

"One day mother secured some Grape-Nuts and ordered me to eat some. I felt better and that night rested fine. As I continued to use the food every day, I grew stronger steadily and now have regained my former good health. I would not be without Grape-Nuts as I believe it is the most health-giving food in the world." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."

Christ's Birthday.

There is something akin to sadness in the fact that in tracing the origin of many of our church festivals we find it in pagan celebrations "antedating the Christian era. There is nothing certain even about the birthday of Christ. Some authorities assert that December was in the dry season, when shepherds were on duty day and night, that the controversy over the date, extending from November 20 to May, [illegible] 352) had an investigation made by St. Cyril and was satisfied that the 25th of December was correct. It was so established in the Roman church, and before the end of the fourth century the dictum was universally accepted.—Boston Herald.

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To Prove It, A Free Trial Package is Sent Sealed to All Who Write.

Let no woman despair. The sure, quick, permanent cure for drunkenness has been found.

It is Golden Specific. It has no odor. It can be given in tea, coffee or food, so the drunkard will not know it, he will be cured before he knows it, and he will never know why he abandoned the taste for liquor.

Cone Mad from Whiskey

It destroys for drink disappears absolutely and he will even abhor the very sight and smell of whiskey.

The vigor he has wasted away by drink will be restored to him, and his health and strength and cheerfulness will return to brighten your home.

Golden Specific has cured some of the worst cases in daily use. Thousands in every city, many cases who have tried it, Mrs. W. of Harrodsburg, Ky., says: "Mrs. Smith called in the case of your husband two months ago and has not taken a drink since and says Golden Specific is the greatest cure for liquor ever known." Mrs. Anna Zink, R. F. D. No. 6, Salem, City, says: "My husband has not touched liquor since I gave him the sample package of your Golden Specific."

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It costs absolutely nothing to try. Send your name and address to Dr. J. W. Haines, 900 Glenn Building, Cincinnati, Ohio, and he will at once send you a free package of the marvelous Golden Specific in a plain, sealed wrapper.

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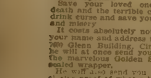

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AN UNDERGROUND CHASE; —or— THE BANDITS OF NEEDLE PEAK.

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CHAPTER X.

OUT OF THE GROUND.

When Mark Powers dropped through the hole in the ground that led to the adventures with Crazy Bill and the madman, his faithful followers stood gasping into the trap wondering what had become of their leader. It all happened so quickly that no one had sufficient warning to enable them to put forth a staying hand and prevent Mark's disappearance.

They stood debating for some time what should be done. Repeated calls down the shaft failed to elicit any answer from the young man. Then the whole band scoured around, looking for some signs of another opening which would enable them to go to the rescue of the lad in the mysterious pit.

They were aware that Bill had a secret hiding place somewhere in the neighborhood, and the appearance of the shaft suggested that it was an opening to some underground chamber, probably inhabited by the very men they had set out to capture.

The search was unsuccessful, and after entering the mouth of the pit seemed to indicate some kind of a trap; and they reasoned that in such a case the man who made it could not be very far away.

A hurry conference with a bright, shrewd look scrutinized the opening and remarked:

"This looked suspicious. Things ain't on the square."

He turned to Charley Price, the new member of the band, who at this moment had not thought it advisable to steal away to his own ranch and for the time being remain, and, fastening a queer look upon that worthy, continued:

"You was the gerloot what led ther outfit to this here region, I believe?"

"I reckon so," calmly answered Price, without flinching.

"You have been on this hyer trail before?"

"I have."

"Yer didn't know o' this hole that yer hoss carefully stepped over without yer giving ther hint that ther was danger as ye rode right behind yer?"

The burly cowpuncher fastened a steellike glitter on the other man as he spoke.

"What does yer mean?" asked Price.

"Yer knows, I guess," went on the cowpuncher, his tone betraying a mistrust of the man he was questioning.

"See here, you ain't insinuating nothing, air yer?"

"Answer my question," rejoined the cowpuncher sternly.

"Don't know nothin' about it," replied Price.

"You lie!" shouted the cowpuncher wrathfully.

Price, who he remained on his horse while the others dismounted to investigate Mark's disappearance, knew that the men about him were not putting the best interpretation on his conduct, and that his safety lay in himself.

Instead of making an effort to resent the insulting words that threw from the surly cowpuncher, he jerked his horse around and galloped down the trail.

The cowpuncher's pistol was out of his belt in an instant. The crack of a .44 rang out on the still night air, and a bullet clipped Price's ear. Though the wound was not dangerous, it caused Price considerable pain.

He uttered a cry of rage and, turning in his saddle, shouted back words of defiance.

Another cowboy jumped on his horse and in pursuit. But the fleet animal of the fugitive disappeared from sight. Price knew of a secret entrance to the cave a quarter of a mile away and headed in that direction.

Ten minutes later he was clearing away some sage brush which covered the opening, big large enough to admit a small wiry horse, such as he was riding. In a moment time both man and rider had plunged out of sight.

The band of cowboys saw that it was useless to try to follow the fellow on such a dark night when he had such a start.

That their fellow was in [illegible] big cowpuncher, "and he knows more about this here contraption in the ground than we all thinks."

The cowboys continued their search, but failed them nothing. They were unable [illegible] of an underground entrance, except the hole in front of them.

The band shouted down the dark pit without receiving any response from their leader. They were continually occupied in [illegible] for him from the time of his disappearance to the moment that he left Pete and struck out with Dora to find their camp.

An instant before Pete ran into the [illegible] part of the shaft to get away from Cougar Bill, the big cowpuncher took a lariat and unwound it till the end almost touched the bottom.

He was about to descend in search of Mark when the boy holding the rope felt a sharp tug. At the same time they heard a shot fired.

"Hurrah!" they shouted, "Mark's all right, though it sounds pretty lively down there. He's grabbed the lariat and is trying to climb up. Pull, everybody pull! We will have him here in a jiffy."

Everybody took a hand in drawing the rope to the surface.

It was not long before the head and shoulders of a young man who looked like Mark came to the top. A lantern was held close to his features.

"You look ragged out, Mark," said the cowboy who held the lantern.

The disclosure of a pistol below drew the attention of everybody from the young man to the lariat, and no one noticed that the supposed Mark Powers failed to answer.

"What is causing the shooting, Mark?" questioned several of the young cowboys in the same breath.

But they had no sooner said this than the fellow who held the lantern put it up to the face of the young man for a second's scrutiny of the lad's features burst out:

"Gee whitaker, this ain't Mark Powers!" Everyone gathered around the two and stared at the stranger in amazement.

The latter had remained open-mouthed at the figure in the ring that had been formed on the ground. He was not notice a girl and a well built young man coming out of the dark shadows ten feet away.

"Gee whitaker, it's Mark Powers," said the lad with the girl in a loud voice.

Every head turned to see who spoke.

"Gee whitaker!" exclaimed the big cowpuncher, and then grew unsteady. "What am I up against? There is two of him—one on that side and one on the other! I'm seeing double. I'm clean drinking, either. Somebody take me to a foolish house, for I am surely crazy." The cowpuncher threw a trembling hand across his moist forehead in an effort to unravel the mystery.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

"Well," said the real Mark Powers, "this is a good joke on you boys."

"It was a joke when it looks so much like you—a relative?"

"No, but even a relative, but one of the bravest fellows I have ever met. Allow me to introduce him—Now Zealand Pete."

"Glad to meet you, pardner," said the cowboys, as they each shook hands with the new arrival whose likeness to Mark caused them so much surprise.

"Where are you from all this time, Mark?" they questioned their popular leader eventually, after Pete had been formally presented to them.

Mark then told them in as few words as possible all that had occurred from the time he fell into the trap till now.

"So Cougar Bill is in there?" asked the burly cowpuncher after Mark had finished.

"Well, I guess that the chap what is called Charley Price will have us about in his noddin' with him now, and chuckling ter think he's got us with a whole band. We will get the two vermits in a jiffy, though."

"Yes," said Mark. "And we better get right to work if they are to be bagged at all."

Pete glanced around and said:

"Yes, boys, it will have to be done on the jump, because Cougar Bill knows by this time that Mark has escaped, and that we probably are onto his game, and are waiting for him. He knew that all of you were near this hole, and I climbed out of it it did not take him long to see that we are onto his racket, if I am any good at guessing."

"That's true as preachin'," chimed in the big cowpuncher. "I have been watching the lariatein to hear what we has up our sleeves, and stands ready all artillery ready to give us a right royal reception. Yer see I was not certain what fired the shot we just heard, Mr. Pete?"

"The same man," answered the individual addressed.

While this conversation was going on Dora wandered out on the plain and pursued a little quiet investigation unnoticed by her companions. She had not gone more than a hundred yards when she stumbled over a boulder lying close to the hillside. As she fell, she instinctively put out her hands to break the fall. In doing so her right hand came in contact with a scrubby sage brush.

The girl clutched it and as her hand entered the branches, the roots gave way, disclosing a dark opening at the bottom of the cliff. She would have taken it for a slight cleft only a foot or two deep, and passed on without paying any more attention to it, but for the fact that instantly she felt a current of air fan her cheek. The was no breeze blowing, which made it seem all the more strange.

"Air doesn't blow out of a hole like this unless it comes in at some other place," she exclaimed softly to herself.

She bent over and felt the sides of the opening. It appeared to be only a fissure one foot high and three inches wide. But it occurred to her that this aperture might be some kind of a ventilator for a secret chamber.

She placed both hands on both sides of the hole and tugged at them to find out if they were really part of the cliff itself or could be moved. The moment she exerted pressure on the stone it parted in two pieces. They slid back like two folding doors and disclosed an aperture four feet in diameter.

"A secret entrance to Bill's cave!" exclaimed Dora excitedly.

She crawled in on her hands and knees, intending to see where the mysterious tunnel led to.

She was so intent on solving the mystery that it did not occur to her to go back to the cowboys and tell them of her discovery.

She had gone fifty feet when the tunnel began to enlarge. But it was still pitch dark, so that she had no idea what kind of a place she was in. In moving her hand in front of her face it came in contact with a cold, scaly object that sent a chill through her veins. She drew her hand back with a jerk, thinking she had grasped a snake.

But it was only a harmless lizard which had crept from its home in a fissure in the wall. But Dora noticed the little animal seemed to be in a hurry, as if it had been disturbed and was anxious to escape from something.

"There is a reason for this," she exclaimed. "There must be something or other coming behind, to make that little creature scurry along so fast."

As she uttered these words, Dora came to a point where the tunnel suddenly opened out on a passageway that seemed to be one of the main corridors of Bill's underground retreat.

As she drew back into a niche in the wall of the gallery after leaving the narrow tunnel, she heard the heavy tread of cowhide boots.

"Who is this?" she said calmly to herself.

She had just hid herself in time. Had she remained in the small tunnel a second longer she would have come face to face with a person crawling on his hands and knees, making a bee line right to the very spot by the way she had just entered.

It was no difficult task to see who it was, but she instinctively felt that the man was Cougar Bill.

He began to talk to himself, unconscious of any listener overhearing what he was saying.

"This here little alley isn't known to anybody, not even Crazy Bill," he said aloud. "It is always a good thing to have one place that's a secret, where a fellow can vamose to in a hurry. You can't tell when a pal might take a notion to put the hooks into you. I never has any chance with those around me who seem to be good fellows."

Dora drew from her belt a brace of revolvers and held them ready to point at Bill's head and make him throw up his hands.

"It's funny that the cowboys don't come

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down the hole to investigate," muttered Bill in a perplexed tone. "After that youngster got away from me by shinning up the rope I expected to see the whole bunch sailing down to get me. But they must have lost their nerve. I guess it would be a good idea to reconnoiter from the secret passage, and try to find out what that bunch of short-horns intends to do."

The villainous ex-lion-tamer started to crawl into the tunnel which Dora had just left.

"So he is going to spy, eh!" thought Dora. "I will follow and tell him to throw up his hands the moment he gets to the edge of our camp. This certainly will be easier than chasing him through tunnels to get the drop on him. If you only knew, Bill, that you were playing into our hands!"

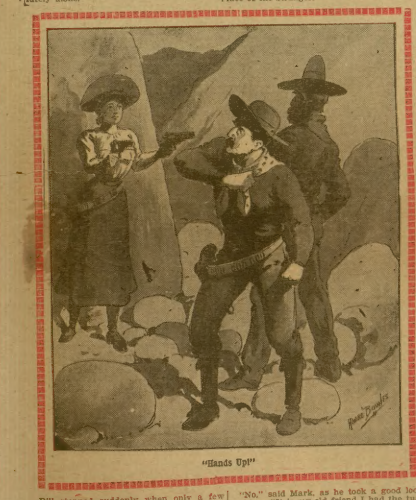
She waited until Bill had gone some distance in the narrow opening before making any attempt to follow him.

Then she stepped on her hands and knees and stealthily crept after him. The space was so small that neither could have turned around if they had tried to. When once in the tunnel a person had to keep going forward until he reached the end.

Dora could hear the creaking of Bill's boots and his muttered curses. She felt thankful, in a way, for hearing them, because they drowned any sound that her movements might make.

She had followed the ex-lion-tamer only a short distance when she detected a sound behind her! She could not turn to find out who it was, and wondered if it could be Charley Price. She supposed that that individual had been watching her from the first and had waited to lay a trap to prevent her escape.

The two figures in the rear crept on silently, unconscious of the presence of the other, while the latter was aware of the presence of those in front of him, including the man who thought that he was absolutely alone.



"Hands Up!"

Bill stopped suddenly when only a few feet from the sliding stone door.

"What do I hear!" he exclaimed.

The moment he stopped those behind him paused till he began to move on.

"Only a piece of rock, I guess," said Bill, as he continued his way.

Shortly after this he reached the end of the tunnel. Placing his hands on the stone door he pushed them aside and stepped out on the plain.

Evidently he thought himself free from observation, for he walked towards the group of young cowboys without once turning his head behind him.

The moment he stood erect and proceeded in the direction of the shaft where Mark Fowers had fallen into the cavern below, Dora scrambled out of the tunnel. She instantly drew to one side and hugged close to the cliff, waiting for the person who followed her into the passage to make his appearance.

Instead of covering him and telling him to throw up his hands she decided that it would be wiser to drop out of sight and wait until Bill had caught up with Bill, as that individual stood listening to the conversation of her friends.

"I can get the drop on both of them at the same time," she reflected. "If I drew down on Price now Bill would hear us and creep up back of me in the dark and get the drop on me."

She directed her attention to the burrow-like opening, waiting for her enemy to come out.

"Why didn't he make me come to a halt before I could get away?" she asked, as it suddenly occurred to her that that would be the logical thing for him to do if he knew that she was in the tunnel.

The truth of the matter was that the madman, who she thought was Price, was perfectly sane again, and knew that a woman was in front of him in the passage-way. He saw from the quiet way in which she followed Bill that she also was on the man's trail; consequently he was careful not to do anything that would make Bill suspect that he was being watched.

A head soon emerged from the opening and turned cautiously around. The man standing for Dora was completely hidden from view, and Bill was too far advanced by this time to be seen even in dim outline.

The stranger rose to his feet and stole along after Bill, being guided by the faint sound of footsteps. Dora followed the two men with a cat-like tread. Her revolvers were cocked at instant use.

Bill had advanced within a few feet of the cottonwood, when were talking about the disappearance of Dora, when he dropped behind a boulder to listen.

Right behind him was the stranger with a drawn six-shooter. He was about to cover Bill when Dora who had just caught up with the men, came within sight. Both her revolvers were suddenly raised and pointed at the two villains.

"Hands up! Charley Price and Cougar Bill!" she commanded in a loud voice.

Both men turned and looked down the muzzle of her six-shooters, their faces betraying amusement in the flash of a lantern which the burly cowpuncher had cast in their direction the moment he heard Dora's voice.

"The first one that moves is a dead man," warned the girl, as she detected Bill's hand steal towards his belt. "The first to up, and there is no use of trying to play the game any longer."

By this time Mark had rushed up to them, calling to his cowboys for more light, as he started toward the outlaws.

"Why, this ain't Charley Price," cried the big cowpuncher, as he scrutinized the face of the stranger.

"No," said Mark, as he took a good look at him. "It is my old friend I had the tussle with in the tunnel a short time ago. Then addressing Dora he said: "Never mind covering him; he's all right."

The big cowpuncher had been looking intently at the stranger, and the moment Mark spoke to Dora, he also addressed the man.

"Yer can put yer hands down; ther boss is yer pard all right, though I never seed yer before. But what he says goes, so come her and jine the group."

The stranger did as he was bidden, while Cougar Bill remained where he was.

"Give me a rope," Mark called out. "We won't let Bill got away from us. He is a pretty slick individual, and has kept out of our hands since we chased him around on the wilds of Arizona, but we have got him for keeps this time."

As Mark said this the stranger and Pete sprang forward and said:

"Let me settle the villain."

"No!" exclaimed the Bandit Scourge. "This man has broken the law. He is not only a thief but a murderer. I arrest him in accordance with instructions issued by the authorities. Not matter what offenses he has committed against you two men, I as an officer of law and order, cannot let an outsider citizen to take the law permit a private citizen to take the law into his own hands. You are hot-headed now, but when your anger cools a little you will agree that I take the right stand."

"I guess you are speaking horse sense," declared Pete. And the stranger nodded his head in assent.

Cougar Bill was bound and placed on one of the cowboy's horses under the guard of the burly cowpuncher.

"We will have to be careful of this poor fellow here," said Mark as he pointed to the

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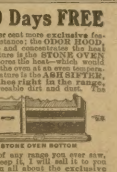

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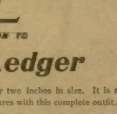

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Those who suffer from it well know the miseries of catarrh. There is no need of it. Why not get it cured? It can be done. The remedy that does this is the invention of Dr. J. W. Blosser, an eminent Southern doctor and minister, who has for over thirty-five years been identified with the cure of catarrh in all its worst forms.

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His discovery is unlike any thing you ever had before. It is not a spray, douche, atomizer, salve, cream or any such thing, but a genuine, tried-and-true cure, that clears out the head, nose, throat and lungs, so that you can again breathe the free air and sleep without that choking, spitting feeling that all catarrh sufferers have. It saves the wear-and-tear of internal medicines which ruin the stomach. It will soon heal the diseased membranes and thus prevent colds, so that you will not be constantly blowing your nose and spitting.

If you have never tried Dr. Blosser's discovery and want to make a trial of it without cost, send your address to Dr. J. W. Blosser, 279 Walton St., Atlanta, Ga., and a good, free trial treatment and also a beautiful illustrated booklet, "How I Cure Catarrh," will be sent you at once, free, showing you how you can cure yourself entirely at home.

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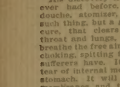

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How to Exercise the Bowels

YOUR intestines are lined inside with millions of suckers, that draw the Nutrition from food as it passes them. But, if the food passes too slowly, it decays before it gets through. Then the little suckers draw Poison from it instead of Nutrition. This Poison makes a Gas that injures your system more than the food should have nourished it.

Never use any remedy for this delayed passage (called Constipation) is to take a big dose of Castor Oil.

* * *

This merely makes slippery the passage for unloading the current cargo.

It does not help the Cause of delay a trifle. It does slacken the Bowel-Muscles, and weakens them for their next task.

Another remedy is to take a strong "Physic," like Salts, Calomel, Jalap, Phosphate of Sodium, Aperient Water, or any of those mixed.

What does the "Physic" do?

It merely flushes out the Bowels with a waste of Digestive Juice, set flowing into the intestines through the tiny suckers.

* *

Cascarets are the only safe medicine for the bowels.

They do not waste any precious fluid of the Bowels, as "Physics" do.

They do not relax the intestines by greasing them like Castor Oil or Glycerine.

They simply stimulate the Bowel-Muscles to do their work naturally, comfortably, and nutritiously.

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They are put up in thin, flat, round-cornered Enamel boxes, so they can be carried in a man's vest pocket, or in a woman's purse, all the time, without bulk or trouble.

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stranger and spoke quietly to one of his companions. "These spells are liable to come on him any time. Should he have one now he would be just as apt to kill you or me as he would Cougar Bill. You keep an eye on him, and when he gets to the railroad station we will communicate with some of his friends and suggest that they send him to a sanitorium for treatment."

"All right," came the response.

While they were talking, one of the cowboys who had been standing near the two others, suddenly cried out in a loud voice:

"Stand up, your hands or I will bore you full of lead!"

Every eye was turned in the direction the cowboy had his pistol pointed. The moon came out just then, and the figure of Charley Price, the spring outlaw, was revealed in bold outline.

"You miserable traitor!" exclaimed the young man who had the drop on him, "I have half a mind to shoot you like a dog!"

"Stand!" shouted Mark as he rushed up to his subordinate, thinking that his angry pal might get the best of the complication a catastrophe which everyone would regret afterwards. Realizing that though he deserves no consideration he must not be killed in cold blood. My band of cowboys have never had the stain placed on their honor, and be careful of it now!"

"I would hardly be justified from plugging this scamp," replied the young man Mark had addressed, "after the way he set us all on this death trap, and now that we have caught him sneaking around as a spy!" and he pointed Mark's gun at the cringing form with his pistol right on the spot."

"You are wrong, Cowboy," said Dora," cried Mark in admiration, as he looked at the cowboy's self-control. "You are the biggest man of the lot. We couldn't get along without you!"

Dora blushed and cast down her head as she murmured faintly:

"I am so glad that you think so, Mr. Powers."

Dora was not quite in love with Mark—or rather she tried to make herself believe that she was—but the events of the past few days had been a compliment from such a world-renowned hero as Mark Powers.

Mark's band of cowboys rode the rest of the night and finally came to a little station called Custer, where they started to take the Overland for San Francisco. A careful guard was kept over the prisoners who were immediately placed in jail on their arrival.

It was found that the tale about the lost prospectors was a myth invented by Bill to cover up his own dastardly deed.

Cougar Bill and Charley Price were tried later on and found guilty of murder in the first degree. They are now locked up in the death chamber of San Quentin waiting the fatal day when they will have to pay dearly for their crimes.

Cougar Bill is hoping against hope for a reprieve from the Governor of the State, but he will never get it. Charley Price has resigned himself to his fate.

The band of cattle rustlers which was supposed to have come out with Bill to aid in his retreat under the mountain had been sent away by its leader after locating in Oregon, and did not return until after his capture.

They were finally located and tagged by the cowboy band. They are now doing time in State's prison, and will not see the outside world for many a day.

The lions of Cougar Bill were afterwards taken from the cavern by Mark and shipped to Barnum & Bailey's circus, where they were added to the menagerie after their long stay in the mountains.

The strange man whose intermittent fits almost caused the death of Dora and Mark was placed in a private hospital, and recovered a year later, so that he is now as sound as a dollar. When Dora reminded him of his reference to a little wife in the brilliantly lighted cave he said that Bill really had a wife whom he had met in days past, but he had not seen her for years and thought that most likely she was dead.

Mark and Dora have never forgot the exciting times they had in the mysterious underground cavern, and the narrow escape from death at the hands of Cougar Bill and the madman.

(The end.)

Why the Indians Masked.

"Among the North American Indians the origin of the use of masks is," says a writer, "in the desire to conceal the emotions. Those should two warriors meet in combat, the mask conceals any expression, whether of sympathy, fear or other agitation. For instance, the knowledge that fear was depicted on one's face and that his antagonist knew it would greatly increase the defeat of the one whose feelings were betrayed by that fear.

"So in religious ceremonies the orator wears a mask that he may speak his inspired words without interference or embarrassment, either of which might arise were his personality not thus veiled. He must not be overawed by anything—a condition which might ensue if he were recognized by friends, relatives or enemies, who might scoff at him.

"When masked the orator's duty is merely to listen to the inspiration which comes without effort through the medium of the spirit. And since this inspiration might arise any of the tribe at such times, all come masked."

The Real Cause.

"Why, little girl, you are black and blue with the cold."

"No'm, I ain't. Dat's where me sweetheart Jimmy Dugan soaked me."

X-Rayed by Love.

(Continued from page three.)

"Yes, and worse. It is unnatural. But I fancy he is really base enough for anything."

"He is, young man!" A harsh, grating voice directly behind the couple fairly spat out the words. "We will see as to that."

Then Harleton VanLear, white with rage, his sunken eyes ablaze, thrust himself between the young man and woman, and turning, grasped the arm of General Gore's daughter.

Harwood had jumped up, thrusting one hand in his pocket, but he met the eyes of the dead magnate's nephew fearlessly.

"Be it you, after all?" added VanLear, for Harry no longer wore the disguising eye-glasses. "Not content with your blunders over the corpse of my uncle, you must meddle in my affairs still. Pity that the rope could not hold you. Remember, though, if I again cause your arrest you will not get loose so easily. Now—go!"

He pointed down the gravelled path, but the ex-reporter merely smiled, though the pupils of his eyes contracted to dangerous pin points of light. VanLear stamped his foot.

"Leave here!" he commanded. "Remain in this neighborhood and I will have you arrested!"

"I hardly think you will. Harry drew from his pocket a revolver, but something infinitely more effectual, it seemed, than the weapon. "Miss Gore, good-by. Leave as a man this!"

The effect on the man was terrible. He uttered an unsteady, his face gray as a dead man's and haggard with the effort of self-suppression. He shrunk and trembled and paled as she, too, looked. Harwood bent forward.

"Do you know where I found that?" he demanded sternly.

Harleton VanLear now gazed at the unmasked waiter, at the glitter of the thing shown, and, as though struck a blow, he stricken him with palsy.

"This strange story will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Very strange and interesting situations develop as the narrative progresses. Now is a good time to subscribe for the Ledger. As a story paper it is acknowledged to have no superior anywhere. Great stories of romance and mystery, of adventure and fascinating detective work, or the exploits of boys and girls, together with poetry and humor are steadily published in its columns. You should take the Ledger regularly. If you have not yet subscribed or your subscription has expired, send in your order for the paper at once. Boys who would like to become Ledger agents or those who desire the latest patterns are requested to note that we are giving three fine premiums absolutely free, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Jewels and Gems.

In an ancient cathedral at Genoa a vase of immense value has been preserved for years. It is of one large emerald. Among its principal diameter is twelve and one-half inches. Large under several folds, the keys of which are in different hands, and it is rarely exhibited in public, then only by an order from the Senate. When exhibited it is suspended round the neck of a priest, and no one else is allowed to touch it but him. It is claimed that this vase is one of the three which were made for Solomon by the Queen of Sheba.

It is said that the most magnificent and costly pearl necklace in the world is now the property of the Countess Henckel. It is made of three large necklaces, each of which enjoyed considerable celebrity in former times. One of them, valued at $60,000, was sold to the Countess by a grandee of Spain, and it is known as the "necklace of the virgin of Atokha"; the second belonged to the ex-queen of Naples, and the third was the famous necklace belonging to the Empress Eugenie, and by her lately sold to a London jeweler for $100,000.

Pearls imported from Australia and Panama are all of medium and large size. Generally speaking, the Indian pearls command the highest price, because of their superior form, many of them being perfectly round, and their brilliant luster.

It has been computed that there are $2,000,000,000 in gold and jewels at the bottom of the sea on the route between England and India.

His Dilemma Was Worse.

An editor of a Western exchange recently worrying about how he would get his shirt on over his wings after reaching paradise. An envious contemporary sarcastically observed that his difficulty would likely be in finding out he could get his hat on over his horns.

Philosophy.

A hair on the head is worth two on the brush.

A WEAK MAN

My Dear Brother: If Worry, Dissipation or Hard Work has worn you out; if the Errors or Weakness of youth or early manhood have unstrung your nerves or sapped your energies; if Advancing Age has weakened your powers; or if Varicocele, Sexual Organs Lost Ambition, Nervousness, Failing Virility, or Bladder or Kidney Troubles make you miserable, I will help you regain the honor as a man that

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P. S.—Some one said: "Beck's Wonder-Workers square my

Annoyances of the Rich.

It is a mistaken idea, said a well-known man of wealth, recently, to think that the man of means is exempt from the anxieties, cares, trials, and tribulations to which the person of limited income is subjected; that life to him is an unceasing round of pleasure; that no obligations rest upon him except by his own volition, and that his sole mission in life is to distribute his possessions among those who allege a necessity for them.

If this estimate of the rich man was correct, how enviable would be his condition, what avenues of uninterrupted enjoyment would be open to him, and how free he would be to dispose of time and money as his tastes and inclinations prompted. In point of fact, however, the rich man, in some respects, is more to be commiserated than envied. He is the prey of that horde of leeches who toil not, neither do they spin, yet who claim that the world owes them a living.

These beggars are the constant, untiring, and unscrupulous destroyers of the rich man's peace and comfort. They exhaust human ingenuity in devising schemes to deplete his purse. They make specious and moving appeals to the softer elements of his nature. They draw such piteous pictures of suffering and want as to induce mistaken and undeserved charity. They are pertinacious in their demands, and importune him at all hours of the day and night. They are devoid of all sense of delicacy and decency, and do not hesitate to violate mistaken and undeserved charity. They are human wolves.

In the multiplicity of the appeals made to him the rich man is liable to errors of judgment in responding. In his desire to assist the deserving he sometimes unwittingly gives to the unworthy, and these charitable mistakes always urge the latter to more active exertions in their pursuit of prey.

The rich man has a delicate and difficult role in life, and, suffering from the perplexities that always surround him, is it to be wondered at that he is in doubt at times whether his wealth is a burden or a blessing?

A Compromise.

"Yes," said the young wife, prodding a strand of seaweed with her parasol, "the first year of our marriage Jim and I squabbled continually over whether we should buy an auto or a motor cycle."

"And how did you settle it?" asked the girl in the white bathing suit.

"We compromised," said the young wife, blushing faintly, "on a baby carriage."

The average man attributes his success to his own good judgment and his failure to his having followed the advice of others.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

A PRAYER FOR THE POOR.

Col' win' an'-a'rin'
Tee'ness on'en de do'—
Laud sen' de Chris'mus
Of peace fer de po'!

Lean wolf a-howlin'
Out dar in de snow—
Laud sen' de Chris'mus
Of peace fer de po'!

Sweet li'l chillun
Wid nowhar tee go—
Laud sen' de Chris'mus
Fer peace fer de po'!

Look on Your Christmas Doorstep.

"Johnny! Jenny! Come here quick." The voice of Jack Eldridge sounded loud and clear through the house.

"We are looking at the Christmas tree," called back Jenny from within, while John sang out:

"What's the matter?"

"Matter," cried Jack again at the top of his voice. "Matter enough. Here is a Christmas baby—right on our doorstep."

And a Christmas baby it was. And such a dear, chubby little fellow.

He was not a Christmas baby such as you read about, all red and crinkly and ugly as they did. But a sturdy boy, fully a year old, and trying to be older. He had yellow hair and bright big blue eyes and a smile that was all dimples.

"It belongs to me," said Jack, "because I found him."

"Oh, please give him to me," pleaded Jenny, "because I am a girl, and girls know how to take care of babies best."

"No, he is mine!" said Jack.

Meanwhile the cause of their discussion sat contentedly in the middle of a big clothes basket gaily chewing his thumb.

"Do you want to come in our house and be our baby?"

And the little Christmas elf laughed and said something which sounded as though he did.

"Then come on. I'll carry you in."

And, borne by the willing hands of all three children, the Christmas baby was carried into the house.

"Let's call him Little Christmas," said Jack.

"What shall we give him for Christmas?" asked Jenny.

"Oh, give him my little chair," said Johnny. "It will just fit him."

And fit him it did, and there Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge found him ten minutes later, when they came into the play-room.

"What in the world have you got?" asked both parents in one breath.

"A Christmas baby," cried the children, all in a chorus.

And a Christmas baby he was, for he looked at the tree, laughed at the toys and enjoyed himself immensely.

"Please, mamma, Nora, the maid, putting her head in the door, "Mrs. O'Flaherty, the woman that lives on the back street, wants to see you. She thinks maybe you have sent her little baby."

"Her little Pat!" said Jack.

"Her little Pat," cried the children.

And then in bounded Mrs. O'Flaherty and up she lifted Little Christmas in her arms and cried for all as though she had been separated from him for years.

"My arms was that tired carrying home clothes," said she, "that I set the clothes basket down in your entry way a minute with Pat in it while I went for me groceries. And when I came back the little innocent was gone! Oh, Pat, me darlint."

"Are you going to take him away?" asked the children, trying to force back the tears.

"You must bring him to call on us soon," said Mrs. Eldridge smiling. And, with his arms full of toys, Little Christmas was carried away.

Two Little Girls' Christmas.

It was Christmas morning. A Christmas tree, still gay with tinsel, colored tapers, and garlands of popcorn, but shorn of its presents, stood in the center of the room. A little girl sat near by with her lips extended in a disagreeable pout. Numerous toys lay on a table, but the girl paid no attention to any of them. Her mother entered.

"Why, Ethel," she exclaimed, "that isn't a nice expression for a little girl to have on Christmas morning, especially a little girl who has received as many presents as you have."

"But, mamma," Ethel said, crossly, "I don't like my presents one bit. My doll is broken, and I wanted a blonde; and I don't like my book; I wanted 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.'"

"But you haven't read your book yet, Ethel."

"I know it's horrid anyway, and I wanted——"

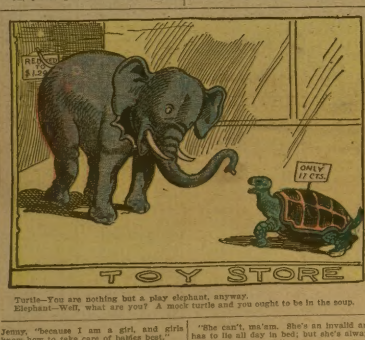
Just then the door-bell rang and a newsboy threw in the morning paper. He was about to go away when the Christmas tree caught his eye.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, clasping his hands together, "how beautiful! I wish Ruth could see that."

"Ruth your sister?" Ethel's mother asked kindly.

"Yes," the boy answered.

"Well, tell her that we will be pleased to have her come to see the tree."



Turtle—You are nothing but a play elephant, anyway.
Elephant—Well, what are you? A mock turtle and you ought to be in the soup.

"She can't, ma'am. She's an invalid and has to lie all day in bed; but she's always so patient and good."

"Was she pleased with her Christmas presents?" Mrs. Gray asked, with a glance at Ethel.

"She got only one, but she was so pleased with that. It was an orange, a great big one. I bought it for her, and she says it will make her happy all day."

FREDDIE'S PLAN.

Another week and then four days
And what a feast I'll get!
I only have to shut my eyes
To see the table set.
I think I will not eat a thing
Until I'm through with school,
So that I will have lots of room
To put those things away.
But ah! I s'pose it can't be done,
Because a boy gets so
Hungry when every meal-time comes,
He's got to eat, you know.
I don't know what I will do—
I'll eat my meals real fast.
And then try to forget them all
As soon as they are past.
And then when Christmas comes
It may be that I'll feel
Almost as hungry as if I
Had never had a meal.

The Japanese Christmas.

The great festival of the year in Japan is the Feast of Dolls, celebrated on the third day of the third month. In every Japanese family of any consequence there is a fireproof vault or storehouse, especially built to hold the dolls, which are handed down from parent to generation. All the year until the first day of the feast the precious dolls are kept safely locked up in this vault. Sometimes there are hundreds of them in the possession of one of the great families. On the first day of the feast the vault is opened and all the dolls are taken out. They are carried into the finest room of the house, where a number of red covered shelves have been built to receive them. Always first among these historic dolls are effigies of the Emperor and Empress, and next to them in importance come small reproductions of the court musicians, all complete to the smallest details. Then there will also be miniatures of other less great but more familiar personages, and for every one there is a complete set of doll furnishings. In the boudoir of one of the doll women, for instance, will be found tiny combs, mirrors, and all the apparatus for blackening the eyebrows, reddening the lips, and performing all the other mysteries of the toilet. There are also complete sets of smoking and dining utensils, and the little girls of a Japanese family, during the three days of the Feast of Dolls, are kept busy seeing that all the puppets are supplied with real food, proper to their rank and station in life.

At the close of the third day all the dolls and their belongings are packed away in their fireproof storehouse, not to be disturbed again until the next year. The Feast of Dolls takes the place of Christmas to the children of Japan.

Christmas Children.

Even were it not for its celebration as the birthday of the Saviour, Dec. 25 would rank as quite a notable date in the year for the number of eminent persons whose natal day it is. Curiously enough, however, we seldom think of this day at the beginning of the career of any one on earth other than He to whom custom has assigned it.

We know that historical events of all sorts—battles, deaths, births—forth-have occurred on Christmas, for articles almost without end dealing with this interesting side of the history of the day have been written, but of its biographical side little has been said. The reason of this because the fact that many notables have been born on that day cannot fail to prove of interest.

The biographical index of Christmas is comparatively long and includes such names as Sir Isaac Newton, William Colman, Sir Henry Irving, W. S. Gilmore, the musician and bandmaster; Richard Person, the greatest classical scholar England ever produced; Johann Jacob Reiske, the celebrated German orientalist; Clara Barton, Admiral S. C. Rohan and a number of others. Unhappy little shavers they must have been in their childhood with their birthday and their Christmas rejoicings all merged in one.

Christmas in Hawaii

Before the missionaries and the American settlers went to Hawaii the natives knew nothing about Christmas, but now they all celebrate the day and do it, of course, in the same way as the Americans who live there, says St. Nicholas. The main difference between Christmas in Honolulu and Christmas in New York is that in Honolulu in December the weather is like June in New York. Birds are warbling in the leafy trees; gardens are ever flowing with roses and carnations; fields and mountain slopes are ablaze with color, and a sunny sky smiles dreamily upon the glories of a summer day. In the morning people go to church, and during the day there are sports and games and merry-making of all sorts. The Christmas dinner is eaten out of doors in the shade of the veranda, and everybody is happy and contented.

A Christmas Game.

"Christmas candles" is a good old-time game. A lighted candle is placed upon a table. Each player is blindfolded and directed with his back to the candle, about a foot from it. He's then told to take three steps forward, turn around three times, then to walk four steps toward the candle and blow it out. His success or failure will probably be as amusing to the audience as disconcerting to himself.

VACANCY.

There's Christmas smiling in the sky,
There's Christmas in the trees,
There's Christmas in the streets near by,
There's Christmas everywhere.

It's Christmas, Christmas everywhere,
No matter where you look;
Since when you start with mild despair
Into your pocketbook.

Hard Connection to Trace.

A little boy came running from his play one day calling, "Mamma, I saw a lot of grandpas." His mother asked him what he meant. He then went on to tell her.

She understood his explanation and said, "You mean ants, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," he said, "I knew they were some relation to us."

CHRISTMAS.

A cheerleader,
A minstrel,
A lover near,
A maid below;
A scuffle dear,
A kiss or so,
And that is Christmas, don't you know?

The Line Drawn.

Ethel—What do you intend to give me for Christmas?

Bertie—Would a kiss answer?

Ethel (with sarcasm)—No. Indeed? Mamma never allows me to accept valuable presents from gentlemen.

Lacked the One Essential.

One day my little brother told mamma that his foot hurt. She told him his foot was asleep. He thought about it a little while and then said:

"How can my foot go to sleep, without any eyes?"